

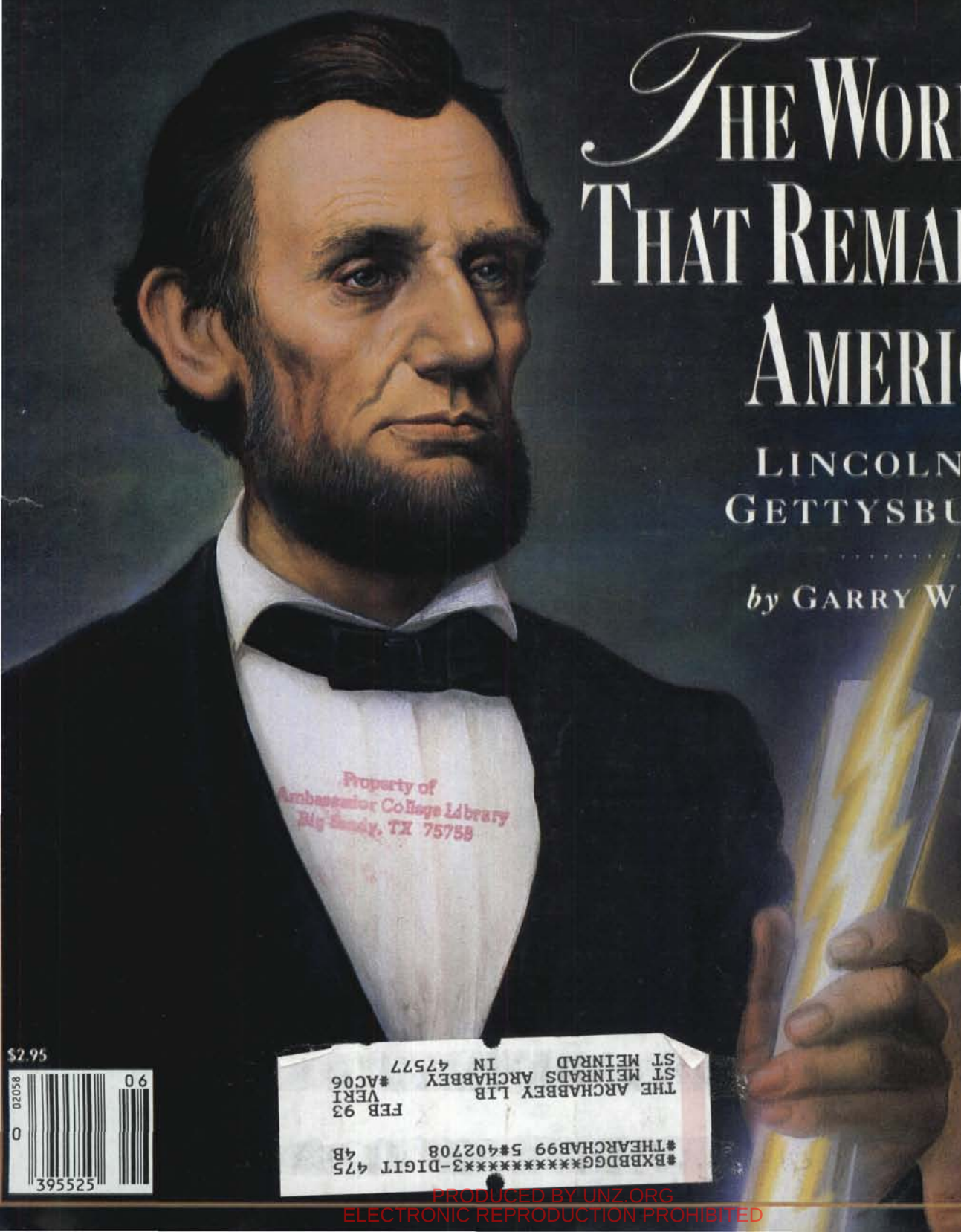
The Atlantic

A STORYBOOK REGION OF ITALY / THE CASE FOR CONFRONTING TERRORISM

THE WORDS THAT REMADE AMERICA

LINCOLN AT
GETTYSBURG

by GARRY WILLS



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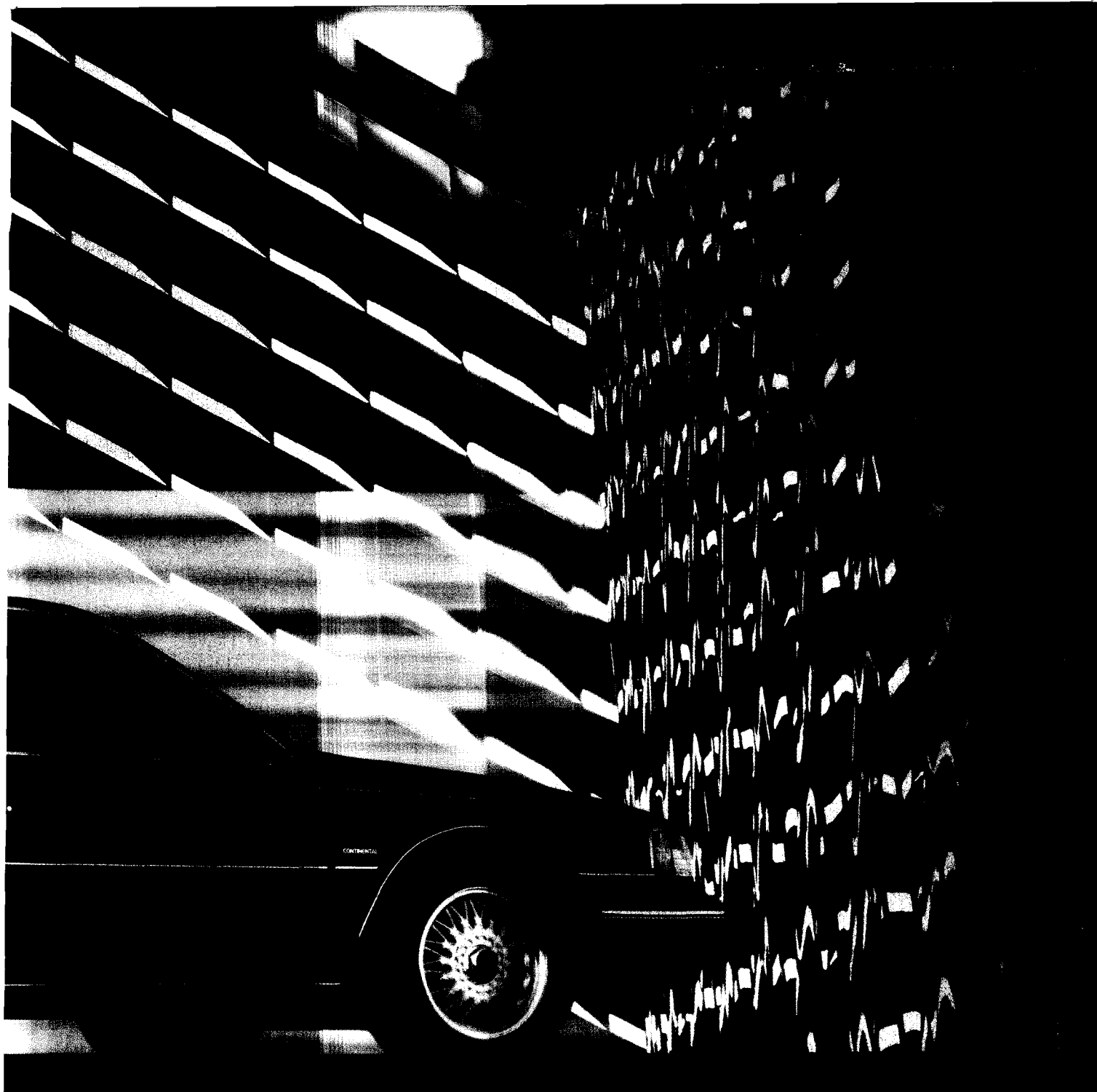




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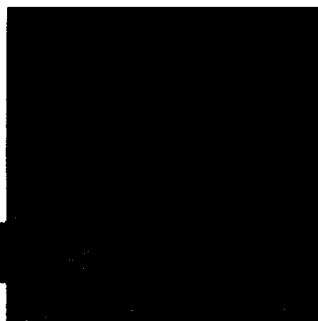
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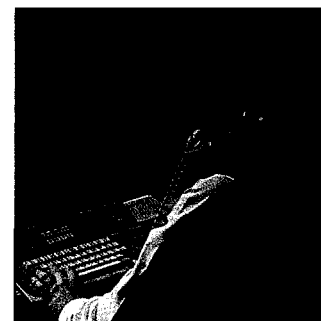
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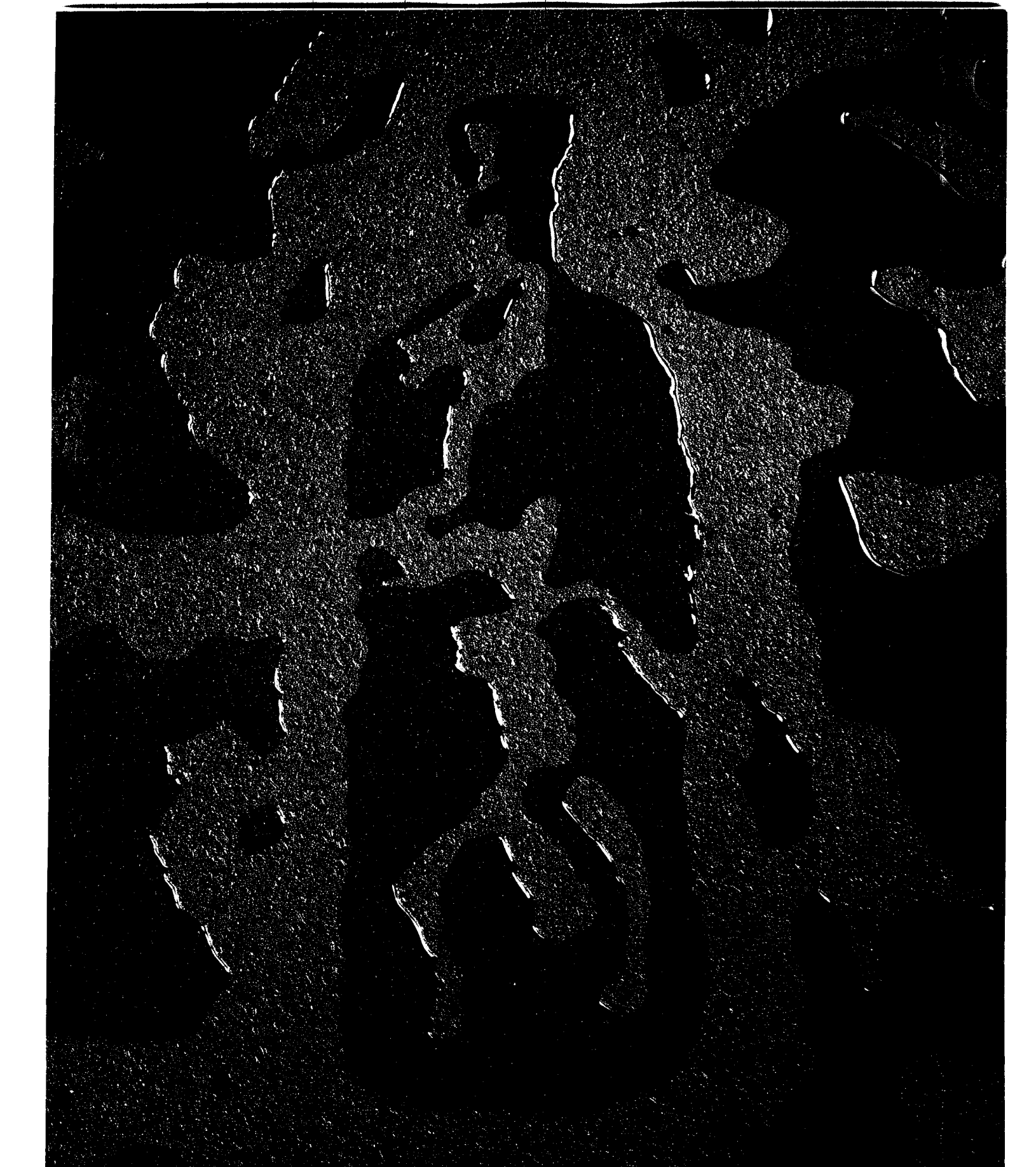
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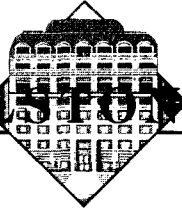


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745 BOYD STREET



THE 1992 PRESIDENTIAL campaign now begins in earnest, with the country aware that it faces a raft of problems too long unattended. Those problems pale, of course, beside the calamity facing the electorate during the first presidential campaign witnessed by this magazine: that of 1860. One wonders whether the problems we face today will be met with even a small fraction of the wisdom and leadership that the winner of the 1860 election, Abraham Lincoln, brought to the crisis facing him. Garry Wills does not address this matter in his cover story, but his essay implicitly invites rumination on the differences between now and then, and on the debt of the former to the latter.

Lincoln is, of course, an endlessly fascinating man, and he figured prominently in this magazine from the very beginning. *The Atlantic Monthly* was founded by abolitionists, and supported Lincoln for the presidency. It carried debate on his policies. In the years since his death it has regularly evoked his memory and pondered his significance—as we do in this issue. Lincoln is known to have been familiar with the magazine. On one occasion, upon receiving the report of two men who had passed through Southern lines and conducted an interview with Jefferson Davis—an interview that was certain to bolster Northern resolve—Lincoln asked the

authors: “Can’t you get it into *The Atlantic Monthly*?” They did, in September and December of 1864.

The Atlantic treated Lincoln the man during his lifetime with a certain delicacy—sensitive, perhaps, to the President’s gangly awkwardness and his difficult personal circumstances. One editor, James T. Fields, went so far as to remove a lengthy descriptive passage about a meeting with Lincoln—“the homeliest man I ever saw”—from an article by Nathaniel Hawthorne (published in July of 1862). Among other things, Fields worried about the effect overseas: “England is reading the Maga. now & will gloat over the monkey figure of ‘Uncle Abe’ as he appears in yr. paper.”

There is no sense in second-guessing Fields, but it is a shame that cutting the description also meant cutting this:

It is the strangest and yet the fittest thing in the jumble of human vicissitudes, that he, out of so many millions, unlooked for, unselected by any intelligible process that could be based upon his genuine qualities, unknown to those who chose him, and unsuspected of what endowments may adapt him for his tremendous responsibility, should have found the way open for him to fling his lank personality into the chair of state.

That is perhaps a reassuring thought—or at least a straw to grasp—in this election year. —THE EDITORS

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GUY BILLOUT (“Shortcut”) has received many awards for his magazine and advertising work, including gold and silver medals from the Society of Illustrators.

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CULLEN MURPHY (“A License to Print Money”) is the managing editor of *The Atlantic*. He is a co-author of *Rubbish! The*

Archaeology of Garbage, to be published this month.

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GARRY WILLS (“The Words That Remade America”) is a former Henry R. Luce Professor of American Culture and Public Policy at Northwestern University. He is the author of *Reagan’s America* (1987) and *Under God* (1990). Wills’s article in this issue of *The Atlantic* will appear, in somewhat different form, in his book *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America*, to be published this month by Simon & Schuster.

WILLIAM H. YOUNGREN (“Music: Classicism Without Irony”) has written widely about music and is completing a doctorate in musicology at Brandeis University.

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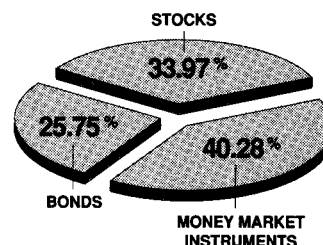
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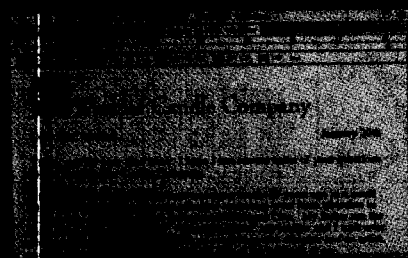
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



JIHAD VS. MCWORLD

Benjamin R. Barber states in "Jihad Vs. McWorld" (March *Atlantic*) that a commonwealth is the only truly democratic means of government left, since both tribalism and globalism have tried and failed to preserve democracy. I agree that tribalism has failed, but globalism as well? Globalism is just beginning in the economic sphere, and in the political sphere it has hardly even begun—in the truest sense of the word. (The United Nations today is deplorably underfunded and lacks the power to enforce its decisions.)

Until the nations of this world totally break down trade barriers and surrender their external sovereignty (that is to say, their "right" to intrude physically in the affairs of another nation) to a representative world government with enforceable world law, McWorld will remain a dream, not a failure.

MICHAEL BRUS
Madison, N.J.

I agree with the conclusion but not the negative tone of Benjamin Barber's article. Barber emphasizes the threats to democracy in recent international trends. However, the simultaneous development of ethnic separatisms (what he calls Jihad) and transnational entities like the European Community (what he calls McWorld) presents an unprecedented opportunity to escape two major dead ends of the twentieth century.

After the First World War, Woodrow Wilson attempted to carve up Europe into separate nation-states, a manifest impossibility given the great number and overlapping territories of European ethnic groups. Shortly thereafter, Lenin and Stalin tried to destroy the separate nationalities of the Soviet Union by amalgamating them into a centralized state dominated by the Communist Party. The bankruptcy of this policy has only recently been made manifest.

Both the Americans and the Soviets spurned the example of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which covered most of Central Europe before the First World War. Yet that loosely federated, multinational state provided a better combination of central authority and decentralized autonomy than the successor states that replaced it.

At present the European Community has an enormous opportunity to recreate the Austro-Hungarian Empire on a more legitimate, and democratic, basis, by recognizing the symbolic and cultural importance of separate ethnic groups yet drawing them into a more universal economic and political federation. Professor Barber should draw attention to this window of opportunity and not muddle the argument with loaded terms such as Jihad and McWorld.

EDWARD R. KANTOWICZ
Chicago, Ill.

Benjamin R. Barber makes no allowance for several ameliorating factors that should prevent the rise of international business and media from submerging individual cultures into bland uniformity. The trend in manufacturing is away from mass production, limited options, and infrequent model changes. Today's successful strategy is smaller production runs targeted at market niches, ample selection of optional features, and continuously upgraded designs. Magazine publishers release each issue in regional editions with varying ads and editorial content. Widely shown TV programs break periodically for insertion of local coverage. The proliferation of cable-TV channels allows live broadcast of city-council meetings and televised tours of homes for sale. These are just a few examples of how developing technology can accommodate and preserve our differences even as it expands our areas of common interest.

BARNEY C. BLACK
Alexandria, Va.



The sheep that came home for winter.

Winds here can scream up to 70 miles per hour. Temperatures plummet to 20 below. This is Stillwater Valley, Montana. The winter home of a small, fledgling herd of Bighorn Sheep. A herd that for years has been struggling to survive. But people who work nearby are providing medication and food to nurture, protect and save these majestic animals. Hopefully helping each generation become healthier. Each generation larger.

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Benjamin Barber makes a number of good points in his essay. But there are several aspects of the McGlobalization phenomenon that are hardly democracy-neutral. From my years of experience as a business manager in one of America's largest corporations, I can say without equivocation that the *only* goal of these organizations is profit. In my company *nothing*, including giving to charitable groups, is done unless it can somehow be connected to protecting or increasing profits. This singular sense of purpose is understood and communicated throughout the organization, and only those people who demonstrate complete fidelity to this principle are guaranteed success and continued employment.

Peter Townsend said years ago that the only way to beat the system is to join it. He was wrong. McWorld has very effective immune systems with which to weed out undesirables from within. Our corporations are not at fault for this situation; business only optimizes the job that society has entrusted to it. Our democratic government can and must protect itself by protecting the civil rights of employees. Or has democracy already been swallowed up by the system? I, for one, think it has.

ROBERT FIREOVID
Pittsfield, Mass.

Benjamin Barber puts forth the old, tired liberal argument that free-market enterprise is the antithesis of democratic government. That his preferences are socialistic is apparent when he drones incessantly about the supposed "impersonalization" of the global-market influence and when he comments that McWorld is "bureaucratic, technocratic, and meritocratic, focused (as Marx predicted it would be) on the administration of things." He ignores the very fact that these market forces are developed and nurtured at their best only in democracies (the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Germany) and that they were the very forces that brought down totalitarian communism (Eastern Europe) and exposed the insipidness of socialism (Sweden, France).

WALTER L. WOJAK
Terre Haute, Ind.

Your illustrations for the article "Jihad Vs. McWorld" reflect the long-term bias present in so much commen-

tary about foreign peoples. The Arab caricature and that for the Northern Ireland figure show armed and angry partisans. Depictions of figures from other groups are relatively benign, showing them with guitars, hamburgers, and so forth.

DENNIS CLARK
Philadelphia, Pa.

Judging from the illustrations that accompanied the piece, so homogenizing is McWorld that it will have no women.

SUSAN L.Q. FLAHERTY
Washington, D.C.

I must with "Jihadic" candor express my displeasure at Benjamin Barber's insinuation that Catholic social principles would have "uncertain consequences for democracy." Obviously, Barber hasn't examined the Church's efforts to bring about democracy in Latin America or the Church's statements about social justice, particularly since John XXIII. We really can't talk about democracy until peace and justice are achieved among the restive peoples of the world.

LAWRENCE PETRUS
Rocky River, Ohio

Benjamin R. Barber replies:

Michael Brus, Edward Kantowicz, and Barney Black share a certain optimism about the democratic possibilities of various forms of internationalism, if not necessarily of McWorld. Trouble is, it is a long way from Mr. Kantowicz's "unprecedented opportunity" to the reality of what he hopes will be "a more universal economic and political federation." Mr. Black is at least usefully specific about some of the ways in which appropriate technology could be employed to steer business in democratic directions—although Robert Fireovid offers persuasive reasons for suspecting that the profit motive is not likely to turn technology to democratic purposes without the imposition of political will, which of course was my point. My minimalist position was that McWorld is at best democracy-neutral. Fireovid suggests that it can be democracy-corrosive, and I wouldn't disagree.

This will no doubt further outrage Walter Wojak, whose quaint penchant for pink-baiting assures me that history and ideological conflict are not really

over after all. Now, as in the good old days of Cold War rhetoric, this style of argument (in which terms like "socialistic" take the place of reasoned discussion) doesn't bother to read, it just rants. What I wrote about capitalism was not the "old, tired liberal argument that free-market enterprise is the antithesis of democratic government" but the quite different, slightly less old and tired, and not at all liberal argument that although the market imperative has "reinforced the quest for international peace and stability" and is an enemy of "parochialism, isolation, fractiousness, [and] war," it nevertheless "is not identical with the democratic imperative." Nothing about antitheses, nothing about the virtues of socialism, just that capitalism and democracy are not identical (a proposition that not even Milton Friedman would contest), and therefore that in promoting the former we cannot assume that we guarantee the latter.

As far as the artwork goes—although it isn't my responsibility—yes, the cartoon figures are stereotypical. Aren't cartoons precisely pictures of reality stereotypically rendered for comic effect? I fear that Dennis Clark has missed the point: although some of the figures on the cover have guns, and others appear as armed on the inside pages, they are all eating hamburgers—which I thought was the artist's point (it was certainly mine). But come to think of it, if Mr. Clark is right about unfair stereotyping, maybe Susan Flaherty should feel relieved rather than aggrieved that women are not depicted in the artwork. They will certainly be included in McWorld, for which they will unfortunately have little reason to feel grateful.

Pace Lawrence Petrus, I do not wish to stereotype Catholic social principles (which in parts of Latin America *have* been progressive, but which can also be regressive) as archetypical of Jihad. Protestant, Islamic, and Jewish fundamentalisms are more than their equal, and Jihad from this perspective has a genuinely (small *c*!) catholic flavor.

CHILDHOOD MISERY

Nicholas Lemann fails to make several important distinctions in his review "The Vogue of Childhood Misery" (March *Atlantic*). First, he lumps



all types of family dysfunction into one category and fails to distinguish between physical and sexual child abuse and other less clear types of emotional abuse. There is a substantial difference between beating or raping a child and leaving the child with grandparents for a few years. Lemann also makes an inaccurate statement when he claims that accusations of child abuse have been directed particularly at divorced fathers and at the staffs of day-care centers. These are simply the cases that have been widely reported in the media. I also find it irresponsible of Lemann to imply that allegations of abuse are directed specifically at divorced fathers—as if reports of this type are simply the act of vengeful divorced mothers.

GINGER MOORE
Meadville, Pa.

I can only hope that Patti Davis heeds Nicholas Lemann's psychiatric advice about the benefits of good old-fashioned child abuse. When she learns to dismiss her family problems as airily as do her father and Huck Finn, she'll be past childhood traumas and able to address the real issues: evil empires, welfare queens, Libyan hit squads, the oppression of the rich, and reverse discrimination. Especially that last item—if you read Mark Twain, you'll find that slavery was not really such a bad thing. It's impossible to miss the point, unless you're especially obtuse.

NICHOLAS WATTERS
Chicago, Ill.

Nicholas Lemann replies:

Ginger Moore is right in saying that my article didn't spend any time parsing the different kinds of child abuse. I didn't see that as my mission: I was trying to explain the current national obsession with unhappy childhood, not to assess the problem of child abuse. But Ms. Moore's letter hasn't persuaded me that divorced fathers and day-care centers aren't the most common targets of allegations of child abuse.

To Nicholas Watters I can only say, Oh, come on! I didn't ascribe any "benefits" to "good old-fashioned child abuse" in my article, and, more generally, the communications gap between me and someone who sees *Huckleberry Finn* as a pro-slavery text is so wide that there's no hope of our working out our differences through this kind of exchange.

JAZZ ARRANGERS

In Francis Davis's article "Man With a Horn" (*March Atlantic*), Dizzy Gillespie's current United Nation Orchestra is described as "likably volatile, thanks in large part to the trombonist Slide Hampton's gutsy arrangements." Since Hampton and Paquito D'Rivera are listed as music directors on the band's CD *Live at the Royal Festival Hall*, Davis understandably concluded that Slide (a gifted orchestrator for more than thirty years) did all the arrangements. However, this is not so.

When the U.N. Orchestra was formed, in 1988, a number of arrangers were asked to contribute music: Mike Abene, Kenny Berger, Mike Crotty, Hampton, and myself among them. Of the arrangements of Dizzy's tunes that ended up on the recording, Abene did "Tin Tin Deo," Berger did "Kush," and I did "Tanga." Two other pieces on the CD are originals by Paquito and Steve Turre, which I assume (without knowing for sure) that they themselves arranged.

I hasten to add that Slide Hampton

is not responsible for the absence of arranging credits. The recording's producers (no fewer than five are listed in the otherwise extensive credits) are.

BILL KIRCHNER
Riverdale, N.Y.

Francis Davis replies:

Thanks to Bill Kirchner for setting the record straight. Arrangers are among the unsung heroes of jazz. They are indispensable to big bands and should in all instances be given credit for their work—just as record producers are routinely given credit for theirs.

WATCHING TELEVISION

One glaring omission in "Watching Americans Watch TV," by Erik Larson (*March Atlantic*), is the failure even to hint at the tremendous impact on commercial viewing of the handheld remote control. Being able to ignore commercials by flipping away from them instantly is as important as any other factor mentioned, such as popcorn popping, bathroom visits,

From beginning



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making love, or fighting with a spouse. Nielsen's own records for prime ad times (on the hour and half-hour) would probably show a large number of households tiptoeing through the channels during those times.

Also, Larson notes that seven of the fifty most-watched shows in television history were 1964 episodes of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, but he doesn't say what the other shows were. How about completing the record by publishing a listing of the fifty most-watched shows, maybe as a little box in response to this missive?

EDGAR F. COUDAL
Nokomis, Fla.

I was surprised that Erik Larson was mute about how the "reach" of TV advertising has been affected by one of the greatest advances in television technology: the mute button. I love this button! Wouldn't it be a relatively simple matter to install a sensor on viewmeters to record mute-button activity, if this is not done already?

NICHOLAS LANGE
Cambridge, Mass.

MARKETING MEDICINE

Beware of doctors bearing altruism. Arnold Relman ("What Market Values Are Doing to Medicine," March *Atlantic*) argues that medicine has become too much of a business and that doctors need to get back to altruism. This is a cynical move by Relman and his colleagues to improve their business under the guise of virtue and at the cost of making all of us unwilling customers. The real problem with medicine is that it is not enough of a business.

As Relman acknowledges, there are too many hospitals and doctors, hospital beds go unoccupied, and doctors are not very busy. Relman and his colleagues want to generate more business for themselves by lowering the cost to additional potential customers while keeping the cost high to a third-party provider, namely the public.

Additionally, public hospitals are finding it hard to compete against the lower prices and better-quality care of private hospitals. They seek legislation to remove the competitive advantage

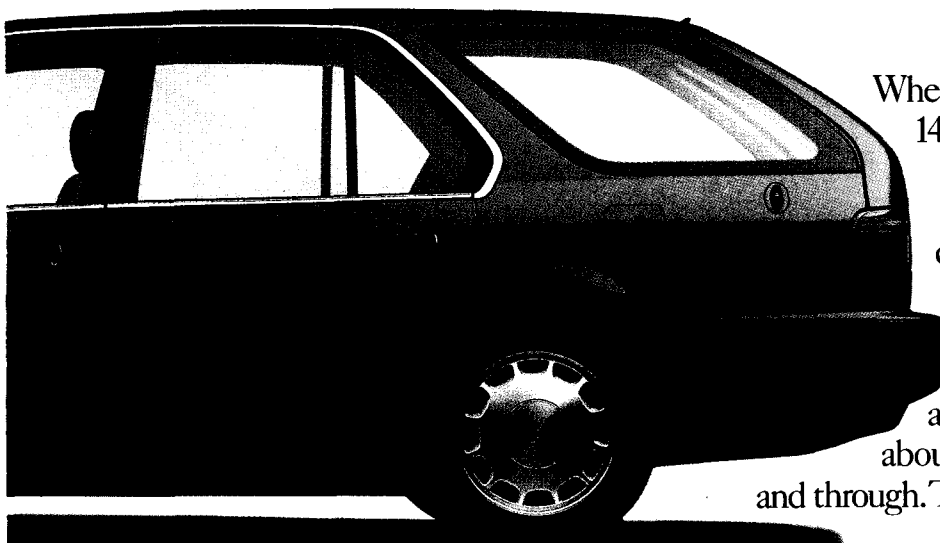
of the superior providers whose performance they cannot match.

Medical care will improve when all recipients, including those who now receive heavily subsidized care, are required to pay a significant portion of their bills. The portion must be enough to make them careful shoppers. They will also need the information on prices and quality that will allow them to comparison shop. This single reform is all that is needed to reduce the cost of medical care and thereby make it more accessible to more people. Despite the low opinion that Relman has of his patients, they are perfectly willing and able to look after their own interests without the paternalism of doctors.

JORDAN ROSENBERG
San Francisco, Calif.

In his excellent article Arnold Relman labors under the impression that physicians are prone to be crooks and do not know the difference between a profession (a service for the benefit of a client) and retailing (have the customer buy as much as you can sell). The ma-

to end. It's an Accord.



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jority of physicians are professionals who put their patients' welfare (physical, mental, economic) above earning an extra buck. If the physician is not the one to administer the business of health care, then who? Government, that institution of efficiency (military) and generosity (Social Security), is primarily interested in cost containment, raising taxes, and bureaucratic compliance. Private businesses such as insurance companies and suppliers do not have the patient's interests at heart. Who is better qualified to invest in and run the neighborhood lab—doctor, local politician, or car salesman?

I have a small lab in my office. Not only does it charge less than the competition but it is convenient for my patients (one stop) and I make sure it does things correctly. The problems we face in our health-care system can be corrected with improvements such as insurance deductibles and utilization credits; malpractice reform (loser pays all), which will cut the 20 percent of medical costs that are defensive; uniform insurance policies and practices (reduce the 19 percent administrative expenses); a serious reduction in oppressive government regulations (15 percent of costs); and penalizing the occasional abusers of the system.

E. J. NEIBURGER, D.D.S.
Waukegan, Ill.

Arnold Relman would have us believe that the unethical proclivities of U.S. physicians characterize health care in this country. In fact what is most unethical is that millions of Americans have either no access or inadequate access to health care, an egregious situation to which Dr. Relman does not even refer. His failure to mention this most pressing problem demonstrates that looking to the medical profession as the synecdoche of U.S. health care is misguided.

The primary issue is how the profession is regulated by government. Yet Dr. Relman does not "want to debate this general proposition." Avoiding this issue while focusing on the ethics of the profession is reminiscent of the effort by the top U.S. business schools in the late 1980s to encourage ethical behavior with courses on ethics; these courses were offered in response to the avarice displayed by established businessmen, behavior that resulted not from bad ethics but from Reagan-in-

spired deregulation earlier in that decade (witness the S&L crisis). Much like these courses, Dr. Relman is attempting to treat the symptom, not the cause.

Ethical behavior by the medical profession needs improvement, and Dr. Relman's exhortation for its improvement is commendable. But this is not enough to improve American medicine. Health-care reform in the nineties is a political issue, just as civil rights was in the sixties; and civil rights achieved more through political action and legislation by the leaders of the movement than through ethical reminders. As a recognized member of the medical community, Dr. Relman should focus on the politics of health care to achieve that most ethical and democratic goal: health care for all.

JOHN WHANG
*College of Physicians and Surgeons
Columbia University
New York, N.Y.*

As the manager of a nonprofit AIDS program, I am often amazed and saddened at the lengths to which health-care companies will go to capture those tantalizing commercially insured patient dollars. AIDS patients, for example, receive many intravenous infusions at home, often daily for a period of years—a tremendously profitable venture for pharmacy vendors and physicians alike. While doing price comparisons for our patients, I found that companies were charging \$31.00 for a vial of vitamins to be used in a daily infusion—a vial that could be bought from a retail pharmacy for \$1.34, or ingested orally for pennies a day. I've seen pharmacy vendors deliver cases of infusion supplies, needles, and tubing to patients who were terminal or on short-term therapy, billing the insurance company for each tube, and refusing to take back unused, unopened cartons of supplies.

Patients, trusting in their physicians, readily agree to multiple daily infusions, not understanding the costs or the potential risks, and not realizing that the "nurse" staffing the physician's office is actually employed by the pharmacy company, providing free labor to the doctor in return for pharmacy referrals. One of my patients ran up an infusion bill of more than \$350,000 in a year, at the risk of going over his \$500,000 major-medical policy.

Certainly many health-care treatments are necessary and beneficial, but the temptation to exploit worried patients by prescribing numerous expensive procedures and drugs is tremendous—it costs the patient nothing, it gives hope, and (the physician's rationale) it prevents malpractice suits. For the physician, paid on a fee-for-service basis, it is easier, faster, and more economical to prescribe a pill or send a patient off for a scan than to talk to the patient, or take a thorough history, or be honest about the course of a disease.

MARY RUMOWICZ
The Visiting Nurse Service of New York

As far as I am concerned, the biggest preventable cause of poor health in Americans is the Doctor-God self-image that is a result of the old-fashioned medical ethics that Arnold Relman pines for. Because going to the doctor is such a time-consuming, degrading, unpleasant, and expensive experience, people need the strongest reasons to subject themselves to such abuse. We don't go to ask medical advice about maintaining our health, or to check into minor symptoms that may be harbingers of major disease. No, we wait until we're almost dead and then expect our foolishness to be paid for by insurance. I haven't had a checkup in twenty-two years, I'm afraid.

JIM EHRLICH, D.V.M.
Argyle, N.Y.

Arnold Relman advocates a system in which all physicians would work for large groups at fixed annual rates (read HMO). Medical care would be decided by committee, not by the needs of individual patients and their families. It's attractive to politicians because costs would be fixed and could be manipulated by fiat.

LELAND L. SPRAGUE, M.D.
Ventura, Calif.

Any economist will tell Arnold Relman that low prices help to broaden access to a service, not the other way around. Commercial enterprise that competes on the basis of value to the customer helps to support universal access, not diminish it. The monopolies that Dr. Relman pines for have been proved over and over again to serve consumers poorly on both price and access. The examples include

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every "company" in the former Soviet empire; state-run commercial monopolies in the West such as British Steel, the U.S. Postal Service, and Teléfonos de México; and the so-called voluntary hospitals in the United States. Their legacy is high prices, awful service, and very limited access (*because* of their high prices).

Commercial enterprise—what Dr. Relman derogates as the "medical-industrial complex"—is precisely what makes our health-care system the best in the world. It is because we allow the market to have a small, albeit distorted, role that people from Canada, Latin America, and other regions with government-run, monopolistic systems come here for treatment. What would happen to our health-care system if commercialism were allowed to take over completely? Purchases might contract over time by \$100 billion or more, prices for discretionary health care such as *in vitro* fertilization, routine checkups, and normal newborn deliveries would probably drop, a commercial enterprise might emerge to police doctors' actions on behalf of patients, cheap, no-frills insurance would become available to

cover medical catastrophes, people might be able to pay for routine health care with cash, and a public safety net for the poorest would be cheaper to administer, because of universally lower prices. In other words, costs would drop and access would increase.

As Dr. Relman correctly envisions, doctors and hospitals would be subject to the market uncertainty that the rest of us live with daily. In our current system has a doctor ever set up a practice and gone bankrupt? For all the "excess" capacity that Dr. Relman be-

lieves exists in hospitals, how many of six thousand hospitals have closed? In a commercial system some doctors might be driven into other lines of work and many hospitals would close. It is most likely that doctors would become well-paid, salaried employees of larger medical corporations. The demi-god concept would fade away and be replaced by a social contract for cheap service, broad access, and responsive providers. Burying Hippocrates, Maimonides, and Marx is clearly worth the price.

Doctors have much to gain from a

Arnold S. Relman, M.D., replies:

If Jordan Rosenberg really wants to make medical practice more of a business, he probably has never been very ill and therefore has never personally experienced the dependence of a patient on the compassion and professional skill of doctors and nurses. Sick patients are rarely able to look after their own interests like knowledgeable shoppers in a shopping mall, and very few of them would want to accept the "caveat emptor" rule he wishes to apply to medical care. When I need medi-

cal treatment, I certainly expect something better from my physicians—and so, I suspect, would he.

I am in sympathy with E. J. Neiburger's insistence that physicians, not government, manage medical facilities. My concern is with an economic environment that forces physicians to pay more attention to their revenues than to their professional commitments.

I agree with John Whang that health-care reform will require political action. That is why I said that the medical profession will need "help" in reforming the system. Political action is the key, but it will not be effective without the co-

operation of the profession.

Mary Rumowicz's comments underscore what I said about the abuses resulting from the commercialization of medical care.

Jim Ehrlich has it wrong. The medical ethic I advocate is patient-centered, not doctor-centered. It puts the welfare of patients first, and it expects doctors to be helpful, not intimidating.

I had no space to develop my ideas about prepaid group practice (HMOs), but I can assure Leland Sprague that I do not advocate any system of care that

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commercial system, including the unambiguous role of serving patients at a market-determined and fair profit. The beliefs that Dr. Relman holds offer no solutions to health care's problems of cost and access because they deny economic reality. Embracing commercialism may offend the sensibilities of some doctors, but it would mean good news for the people Dr. Relman says should matter most: patients.

ANDREW F. GREENE
Health Care Management Consultant
Chicago, Ill.



interferes with a doctor's freedom to treat patients according to the highest professional standards. Unfortunately some HMOs interfere with this freedom—but others do not. It all depends on how they are organized and administered. In the best HMOs doctors and patients are very much satisfied with the services being provided.

Andrew Greene, like Jordan Rosenberg, thinks that free enterprise is the answer to our health-care problems. This delusion stems from a failure to consider the basic distinctions, discussed in my article, between health services and commerce. I maintain that the critical problems in health care—excessive costs and decreasing access—are getting worse precisely because we have allowed commercial considerations to override social needs.

POW/MIA MYTH

H. Bruce Franklin's "The POW/MIA Myth" (December *Atlantic*) tells us that a "numbers game" is being played with the possible total of claimed POWs. The problem is, these numbers can be moved up as well as down. (One activist recently obtained a Laotian propaganda tract claiming that Laos received 369 U.S. prisoners as "war booty.") The bottom line is, the United States and the Pathet Lao had publicly stated that the latter were holding POWs in the hundreds, not a single one of whom was returned. Franklin shuffles the numbers to make it look like we received more POWs from Laos than we claimed were there; in fact the seven (or nine) POWs in question were prisoners of the Vietnamese fraudulently passed off as Pathet Lao captives.

Every "responsible" investigation, we are told, has reached the conclusion that there is no "credible evidence" (or "conclusive" evidence) that POWs are still alive. Two key points: the "credible evidence" (a.k.a. "usable proof") standard is a term of art, not to be confused with the plain, ordinary meaning of the words. The test is so rigid that it will never be satisfied (an escaping POW who sees other POWs in captivity wouldn't meet this particular test). Even if it could be satisfied, the intelligence analysts have a "mind-set to debunk"—a charge initiated by Lieutenant General Eugene F. Tighe, Jr.,

who retired in 1981 as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and continued through this spring by Colonel Millard Peck, who just resigned as head of the POW-MIA special office at the DIA. Solid intelligence will never surmount the barriers erected.

As for the supposed merits of the "investigations" cited:

1) Why should anyone continue to accept the conclusion of the 1976 Montgomery Report, when it predates almost all the live-sighting reports, which fuel the current debate, and when its panel did not have access to quite a few other pieces of intelligence since revealed?

2) Franklin complains that the POW issue has been politically manipulated; why doesn't he apply this same analysis to the Montgomery Report? The select committee actually deadlocked at 5-5, but the vote to release the report was adroitly scheduled for a time when two Montgomery opponents were out of town.

3) If *Politics of the Missing Man*, by Douglas Clark, counts as one of the investigations, why don't other books, such as *First Heroes*, by Rod Colvin, various works by Larry O'Daniel and David Dimas, and *The Bamboo Cage*, by Nigel Cawthorne (this last is considered by many activists to be the best book published on the subject)?

4) Hasn't Franklin ever heard of the 1986 Tighe Report?

5) What about the Helms-Grassley reports? Or the Interim Report's reference to the 1974 Whitmire Report (currently denied by the Pentagon)?

6) How does the Final Interagency Report of the Reagan Administration qualify as a true investigation, when it's nothing more than the aforementioned *Fact Book*, coupled with a special section on how difficult it is to collect intelligence? Note also: why doesn't the Interagency Report mention the Tighe Report at all?

Franklin's piece contains numerous lesser errors. To pick a few: the raid into Laos didn't "discover" that the "Fort Apache" site "was not a POW camp after all"—as related in *First Heroes*. The suspected POWs had been discovered in an interior compound; the ground reconnaissance team was never informed of this fact, and therefore photographed only the exterior camp: they didn't even look in the right place. We're told that Colonel

Charles Shelton is "known to have died a quarter of a century ago," although the documentation for this assertion (assembled by "debunkers") only "indicates" this; meanwhile, there is plenty of evidence (in the normal meaning of the word) that Shelton may have survived to this date.

WILLIAM T. BENNETT
National Vietnam Veterans Coalition
Washington, D.C.

H. Bruce Franklin's article "The POW/MIA Myth" could give the reader the impression I was part of a giant conspiracy. Nothing could be more incorrect.

When my husband, then Commander James B. Stockdale, USN, was shot down, in September of 1965, he was listed as missing in action. I first knew he had survived when I received a letter from him in April of 1966. I had to implore the Johnson Administration to list him as a prisoner of war instead of MIA. It took me four months and two trips from California to Washington to do this.

The National League of Families was not organized by the U.S. government. It was the outgrowth of the San Diego League of Wives of American Vietnam Prisoners of War, formalized in 1967. Our purpose was to pressure our government to send someone to San Diego to answer our questions. Ambassador Averell Harriman sent his assistant, Frank Sieverts, who told us that our men were being well treated and we should keep quiet about where they were. Our San Diego League of Wives disagreed with this "keep quiet" policy, and we worked our hearts out to get two thousand telegrams on newly inaugurated President Nixon's desk. We wanted the torture and mistreatment of our men publicly acknowledged by their Commander in Chief. This was the background for Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's May 19, 1969, public statement that American POWs were being mistreated. Dan Henkin, then the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, told me that the Administration knew they had to join us POW wives or we were going to wipe up the floor with them. Not exactly the statement of a member of the kind of conspiracy Franklin seems to think existed.

SYBIL STOCKDALE
Stanford, Calif.



"The POW/MIA Myth" is interesting and presents a great deal of historical comment about a part of American history that may never be fully understood. I do not quarrel with most of the factual events on which H. Bruce Franklin reports. However, there seems to be a consistent and incorrect thesis at least insofar as his attempts to suggest that the work of the National League of Families and Servicemen Missing and Captured in Southeast Asia was part of a government-controlled conspiracy.

Franklin is correct that I served in the Office of International Security Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense while working on POW matters, and that I assisted in the preparation of the National League of Families' founding and incorporation. If he is implying that I was working on behalf of the government or following some government-directed policy in my work for the National League of Families, he is totally incorrect.

During my time with the Defense Department I met and attempted to help many of the family members of servicemen who were then missing or captured in Southeast Asia. I became very personally devoted to the problems of these family members, most of whom did not know if their loved ones were dead or alive in Southeast Asia. I offered to assist them in any way possible when I left government and returned to private life.

I was proud to serve pro bono as the outside counsel to the National League of Families when it was organized and until the POWs were returned. I assure you that the National League of Families was not in any conspiracy with the U.S. government. From its beginning, with Sybil Stockdale as the first chairman of the board of directors, it was composed of and operated by family members who had only the interests of their loved ones in mind as they developed and implemented policy. This policy could be simply stated as doing everything possible to secure the protections of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War for U.S. servicemen who were missing or captured. More than twenty years later, I have vivid recollections of the intense pressure the families brought to bear on our government to make it more responsive to their overriding concern as to the welfare of their loved ones in Southeast Asia. Certainly

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the National League of Families also exerted pressure on North Vietnam and the Viet Cong to honor their humanitarian obligations.

Even today, when conspiracy theories are very much in vogue, the actual facts regarding the National League of Families could never support Franklin's "conspiracy theory."

CHARLES W. HAVENS III
Washington, D.C.

H. Bruce Franklin replies:

Readers can find *verifiable* documentation of the points challenged by William Bennett in *M.I.A. or Myth-making in America*, my book from which the *Atlantic* piece was excerpted. But it would be irresponsible to let his distortions and falsehoods pass unanswered here, for they exemplify the lifeblood of the POW/MIA myth.

The United States at no time "publicly stated" that the Pathet Lao "were holding POWs in the hundreds." Indeed, at the time of Operation Homecoming the official total of missing U.S. servicemen in Laos was 311, of whom only six were believed to have been captured. The Pathet Lao's propaganda about capturing large numbers of U.S. airmen has been shown to have no more credibility than its official claim to have downed 2,505 U.S. aircraft.

Investigating live sightings was a major concern of the select committee chaired by Representative Montgomery, which certainly did not deadlock on its final report. Among the ten committee members only two (Representatives Gilman and Guyer) expressed any disagreements that, in their words, "prevent us from render-

ing an unqualified endorsement of what is otherwise a comprehensive and meaningful report," achieved under the "stellar leadership" of Chairman Montgomery. The only other member expressing any dissent was Representative Moakley, who said, "My differences with the report are largely a matter of tone," and stated flatly, "The report is an excellent one," and "I wish to make it clear that I have signed the report."

In my book I discuss many other congressional investigations as well as the

discover any verifiable evidence of living POWs. Contrary to Mr. Bennett's claim that "there is plenty of evidence" that Colonel Shelton may still live twenty-seven years after his capture, even his wife, the late Marian Shelton, who remained dedicated to determining his fate, conceded five years ago (see Colvin, pp. 243-246) the improbability that he was then still alive.

Every deed and each word that I attribute to Sybil Stockdale and her old friend Charles Havens is precisely documented in my book; in fact, my main

sources were her own congressional testimony and published writing. If Mrs. Stockdale and Mr. Havens resent having their actions construed as part of a "conspiracy," that is their term and their interpretation, not mine. As shown in the *Atlantic* piece, the Nixon Administration certainly helped create the National League of Families and then used it as support for protracting the Vietnam War. But as explored in the book, the National League began to play a much more complex role even as early as 1971, became an oppositional force during the Ford and Carter Ad-

ministrations, and was finally coopted into the government itself (as part of the POW/MIA Interagency Group) by the Reagan Administration.

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literature of true belief. (For example, Colvin's book is specifically cited three times.) The Final Interagency Report of the Reagan Administration is hardly an expanded version of the Defense Department's annual *POW-MIA Fact Book*, which in fact it directly contradicts. Unlike the *Fact Book*, this report sums up the Reagan Administration's many investigative efforts (including, without naming them, the so-called Tighe Report, spy flights, espionage, and the illegal raids into Laos, and so forth), which, it concedes, all failed to

DARWINISM RECONSIDERED

Regarding the review by Phillip E. Johnson of David Raup's interesting new book on extinction ("The Extinction of Darwinism," February *Atlantic*): It is now widely accepted that the mass extinction of various groups of organ-



isms, including dinosaurs, at the end of the Cretaceous period was caused by the impact of a meteorite. Raup argues that other mass extinctions, some of them even more spectacular than the Cretaceous event, were also caused by meteorites; this point of view is highly controversial among specialists in the field. Naturally there can be no question of adapting to meteorite impacts, which are far too infrequent for "meteorite-resistant" genotypes to be favored by natural selection. The history of life on Earth is unpredictable in detail, because large sections of its fauna and flora are periodically wiped out, regardless of how well they may have been adapted before the catastrophe.

This is an interesting and provocative point of view. Whether it explains a substantial fraction of extinctions, and requires the recognition of important evolutionary processes that act at the level of whole classes or orders of organisms, remains debatable. What it does not explain, as Raup himself is at some pains to make clear, is how organisms have become so highly adapted to their routine ways of life in the long intervals between meteorite strikes. As the result of more than a century of observation and experiment, we now know that the principal cause of adaptation is modification through descent—the Darwinian mechanism usually summarized as "natural selection." The professionals, like Raup, are concerned with working out the details, not with changing the basic theory. There exists a class of literary gent to whom this news has never filtered through, and perhaps never will. The representatives of this breed, who would hesitate to deliver judgment on issues in (say) colloid chemistry of cryonics, are not in the least reluctant to advertise, at frequent intervals, the Death of Darwinism or the End of Evolution in the popular press. One recalls with some embarrassment the Lamarckian fantasies of George Bernard Shaw and Arthur Koestler, for example. The latest recruit to this tawdry band is Phillip E. Johnson.

G.A.C. BELL
*Molson Professor of Genetics
McGill University
Montreal, Que.*

Phillip E. Johnson attempts to discredit the idea of evolution on the grounds that there have been improve-

ments in the theory of evolution since the time of Darwin.

Briefly, the point that Johnson, and perhaps David Raup, do not seem to grasp is that the punctuated-equilibrium model of evolution, which is widely if not universally accepted, deals successfully with the problems he raises. The modern theory of evolution is not weakened but, rather, reinforced by the idea that mass extinctions were the result of catastrophic biological, geological, or astronomical events. Extinctions resulting from new diseases, new predators (as *Homo sapiens*), subsidence of land masses, glaciation, or impact by celestial objects differ only in extent and celerity from Darwin's slow differential attrition. They all result in natural selection, sometimes with a scalpel, sometimes with a sledgehammer. The failure of the dinosaurs to survive the Cretaceous-Tertiary ("K-T") extinction does mean that they were not as adaptable to disaster as crocodiles, turtles, birds, and mammals were. It does not mean that their genes were "bad," whatever that signifies.

One of the important changes that has occurred in the natural sciences in the past fifty years is that rigid determinism has been replaced by more probabilistic thinking. The principle of uniformitarianism remains the basis for the use of modern rates of erosion, deposition, and decay of radioactive nuclei to date events in the remote geologic past. It was introduced to disallow miracles like the Noachian flood, and to inhibit the casual invocation of natural disaster to explain every change. Realistically understood, however, it does allow for continental drift and possible major climatic changes resulting therefrom (as the freezing of Antarctica). It clearly allows for collisions of the earth with large objects and allows for estimates of the consequences of such events to be made. But it can only say that meteors and meteorites will vary in size and frequency of occurrence. Showers of small meteorites occur every year, comets appear on regular schedules, larger objects fall pretty much at random, and enormous ones are so rare that millions of years may pass between them. There is no evidence that they do not all follow the laws of physics all of the time; there is, however, no chance that we could predict when the next Big One will fall.

But that does not rule out actuarial

uniformitarianism; and that, in turn, does not rule out the occurrence of catastrophes. Catastrophes can produce extreme natural selection with mass extinctions and explosive evolution, and all of this serves to enrich, rather than to destroy, Darwin's fundamental and enduring ideas.

JAMES H. BREWSTER
*Purdue University
West Lafayette, Ind.*

Phillip E. Johnson replies:

Darwinism (not necessarily the same thing as "evolution") asserts that all living organisms evolved by a purposeless process of random genetic change and natural selection. Natural selection *means* selective death—that is, the replacement of relatively inferior creatures by better-adapted ones. The opposite of natural selection is death by chance, or extinction by catastrophes that do not spare the creatures that would be best at surviving and reproducing under normal circumstances. Because Darwin believed that complex organisms evolved by natural selection, he reasoned that extinctions must have occurred by the same process. Modern Darwinists may allow occasional catastrophes to play a subsidiary role, but they have to believe that there is a continual background process of extinction by biological competition.

David Raup now says that it takes a catastrophic "first strike" to trigger an extinction, and the evidence that *any* extinctions occurred according to Darwin's theory is "negligible." If Raup is right, then natural selection wasn't ensuring the survival of the fittest, and biologists need to find a new mechanism to account for the evolution of complex organisms. G.A.C. Bell's response is to sneer that the "professionals" agree that natural selection did the creating, and outsiders should mind their own business. James Brewster chooses the familiar tactic of redefining natural selection as a tautology: whichever groups happened to survive were by definition more adaptable, and the falsification of Darwin's specific account of extinctions only enriches the Founder's "fundamental and enduring ideas." But readers should not be misled by this flurry of angry letters. Darwin understood that creation by natural selection implies a specific (and possibly falsifiable) theory of extinctions, and today's scientists will eventually see his point.

FOCUSING ON EDUCATION

THIS IS PART OF AN ONGOING SERIES OF PUBLIC-SERVICE ADVERTISEMENTS SPONSORED BY ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION ABOUT THE NATION'S EDUCATION CRISIS. THEY ARE PUBLISHED TO ENCOURAGE INFORMED DISCUSSION AND DEBATE.

BLAMING THE JAPANESE FOR OUR economic woes is as unsurprising as it is unwelcome. Prolonged trade deficits have produced tense relations, and the search for scapegoats is understandable—but unworthy. The hard fact is that the deficits are our problem. We are not victims but accomplices. No one forces us to buy Japanese products.

True, the Japanese have a secret trade weapon, but it is one we can emulate: superb schools. By every measure, they outperform us and most of the rest of the world. And they do so in the areas that count in the 1990s and beyond: mathematics and science. Perhaps most important, Japanese schools stress essential traits—not just hard work, but habits of cooperation and collaboration (“Cheating, most people call it,” American Federation of Teachers president Al Shanker wryly notes).

Although the average Japanese school has more than 40 students per teacher, twice our ratio, 96 percent of Japanese 18-year-olds graduate from high school (as compared with 72 percent of Americans). With a 240-day school year—60 days longer than ours—they have completed, in time only, the equivalent of a four-year college degree by the time they earn their high-school diplomas. What else is distinctive about Japanese education? There are no janitors; the kids clean the buildings. Homework? Japanese students do twice as much as Americans do. TV? As Jesse Jackson notes, the Japanese make them, we watch them. After-school jobs? Most Japanese students attend *juku*, private after-school study centers.

Aren't Japanese kids neurotic and suicidal because of this demanding system? Japanese high schools are demanding, but Japan's juvenile suicide rates are actually lower than ours. And Japanese grade schools are so warm, cozy, and “student-centered” that Deweyites are rhapsodic when they see them.

Most telling, however, are Japanese attitudes toward academic success. When asked what accounts for it, Japanese parents invariably answer: “effort, hard work, diligence.” When



Japan's Trade Weapon

BY DENIS P. DOYLE

asked the same question, Americans answer, “native ability, aptitude, talent, luck.” Once upon a time we believed in hard work too.

What's going on? The same thing that happened with televisions, facsimile machines, optics, automobiles, copiers, and personal computers: we invented it, the Japanese perfected it. They work hard and work smart. That's what they have done with their schools, too. General Douglas MacArthur insisted that Japanese education be democratized, a concept the Japanese accepted with one stipulation: they would not lower their standards. The result is the best-educated work force in the world, particularly for an export-led, high-tech, manufacturing economy.

That is the real lesson of the Japanese economic miracle: invest in education. It pays. While we need not copy the Japanese, we can learn from them. We too can create a rigorous, demanding, high-performance school system—one that is consistent with our history and traditions. America's most important chronicler of Japanese education, Merry White, the author of *Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children*, offers good advice: use the Japanese “as a mirror, not as a blueprint.”

Lamenting Japan's economic success serves no one's interest, least of all ours. Indeed, it demeans us, and it deflects us from our true purpose: not to be as good as others but to be better. That's what the American spirit used to be about: no complaining, hard work, genuine accomplishment, pride in a job well done.

Learning from another country is a two-way street. The Japanese, aware that their high-performance schools exact a high price in rigidity and conformity, are looking at American schools. They see aspects they like—flexibility, creativity, and spontaneity—and they plan to borrow these. When they do, watch out!

Denis P. Doyle is an education analyst and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. With David T. Kearns, the deputy secretary of education, he is a co-author of Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make Our Schools Competitive (ICS Press).

DRAWING BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS ALLAUX

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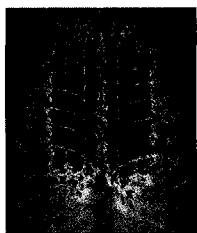
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wet traction, Aquatred also offers full year-
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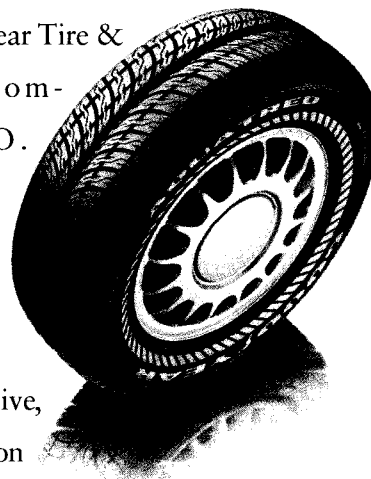
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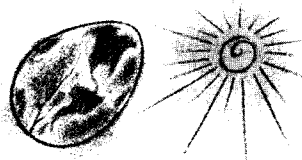
GOODYEAR

THE BEST TIRES IN THE WORLD HAVE GOODYEAR WRITTEN ALL OVER THEM.

THE JUNE ALMANAC

HEALTH & SAFETY

June 1, Levi Strauss & Co. begins offering medical and dental benefits to the unmarried partners, including those of the same sex, of its U.S. employees. The San Francisco-based clothing manufacturer has 23,000 employees nationwide, making it the largest company yet to offer such benefits. Employees' partners will be eligible for coverage if the couple are living together, financially interdependent, and consider their union a life partnership. Some smaller employers, such as Ben & Jerry's, Lotus Development, and the American Psychological Association, and several U.S. municipalities, including San Francisco, Berkeley, and Seattle, already offer domestic-partner plans. Industry analysts believe that other large companies will soon follow the example of Levi Strauss.



ENVIRONMENT

June 3-14, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development—the "Earth Summit"—will be in session in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Many observers fear that the summit and Agenda 21, the planning document it is to generate, will be at best symbolic. Preparatory meetings were marked by unusually united and articulate opposition to the developed countries of the North by the more numerous poorer nations of the South. At issue was which group is more to blame for the world's environmental problems and which is to make the greater sacrifices to correct them. For lack of international agreement, some of the original agenda items, including a worldwide forest-preservation plan and restrictions on hazardous-materials export, have been shelved.



FOOD

June 1, the beginning of the hook-and-line fishing season for the western Atlantic bluefin tuna (net fishermen must wait until August 15). Ninety percent of the world's harvest ends up as sushi, and Japanese buyers are standing by at major fishing ports from New Jersey to Maine to bid on freshly landed bluefin. Top-quality giant bluefin—fish that weigh more than 310 pounds and have a high fat content and bright red, translucent meat—fetch up to \$30 a pound at the dock. These fish are packed in ice and rushed to planes headed for Japan. Medium-quality bluefin usually go to U.S. restaurants. This year the international commission regulating the tuna fishery reduced the allowable catch by 10 percent, the first reduction since limits were established, in 1982. In the 1950s, before the Japanese export market developed, bluefin were caught mainly for sport, and often ended up in cans of cat food or at the dump.

GOVERNMENT

June 2, Alabama, California, Montana, New Jersey, and New Mexico hold primaries. 9, North Dakota holds the final presidential primary of the campaign, which is usually something of an anticlimax: the state's Democrats have already selected their 15 delegates (at a state convention last April), and the Republican nomination is seldom still in doubt. 29-30, five federal agencies sponsor the first government



trade fair of recycled products. The federal bureaucracy is slow to accept such products: at a hearing last fall senators learned that procurement officials refused to buy napkins made from recycled paper because the napkins weren't "bright" enough, and that federal fleet mechanics declined to use re-refined motor oil because they did not think it performed well enough. Congress is working on a new version of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act which may mandate more government attention to recycling.



SKIES

June 1, New Moon. 14, a partial lunar eclipse (beginning about 11:30 P.M. EDT) will be visible over most of North America. 15, Full Moon, also known this month as the Rose, Strawberry, or Honey Moon. Because June is traditionally the month of weddings, the last nickname may have given rise to the post-nuptial connotations of the word "honeymoon." 20, at 11:14 P.M. EDT, the Summer Solstice: summer begins. Today is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

DEMOGRAPHICS

American newlyweds intent on starting a family this month may find their goal more elusive than will their counterparts in the Southern Hemisphere, where it is winter and the days are shorter. Demographers have long noted low conception rates in the summer but have found no evidence of less frequent sexual intercourse to account for it. In temperate climates men produce nearly a third less sperm in summer than in winter, probably as a result of the low level of testosterone which most



men experience then. Recent experiments with human beings, some of whom worked outdoors in the summer while others stayed in air-conditioned offices and homes, and with rhesus monkeys, which were subjected to different regimes of artificial light, strongly suggest that it is the longer daylight hours of summer, rather than the hot weather, that somehow trigger the low hormone output, although the mechanism is not understood.

75 YEARS AGO

André Chéradame, writing in the June, 1917, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Many times, and rightly, the Allies have declared that it was not their object to exterminate the German people and bring about their political extinction. On the other hand, it is just and essential to proclaim that Pan-Germany must be destroyed. On this depends the liberty, not only of Europe, but of the whole world. . . . It cannot be denied that its territory contains considerable latent military and economic resources, as well as strategic positions of world-significance, like the Dardanelles. If these resources were freely exploited and developed to their highest pitch by the relentless organizing spirit of Berlin, Prussianized Pan-Germany, dividing Europe in two, would dominate the Continent, uncontestedly and indefinitely, by means of her crushing strength. France, Russia, England, Italy, ceasing to exist as great powers, could only submit to Germany's will."





*When David told me he'd
give me the sun, the moon
and the stars, I told him
he and my Baileys were just
fine for the
moment.*

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

A License to Print Money

Young countries just starting out find the world's burgeoning nation-hood industry ready to help—perhaps too ready

ANYONE WHO has been associated with the planning of a wedding has at some point been struck by the contrasting world views of the couple at its core and the professionals on its periphery. For the couple, the wedding is a putatively once-in-a-lifetime event, the happy if unpredictable culmination of parallel chains of causality over the millennia. For the florists, the photographers, the caterers, the clerics, the couturiers, the bakers, and the musicians, the wedding is just a day on the job—no different, really, from thousands of other days. One encounters divergences of this kind on many important occasions (in the delivery room, at the funeral home), and it is at once disconcerting and reassuring to realize that situations of unique personal moment are to a large degree also matters of routine—that surrounding every existential exclamation point is a group of competent professionals to whom the occasion is merely a comma.

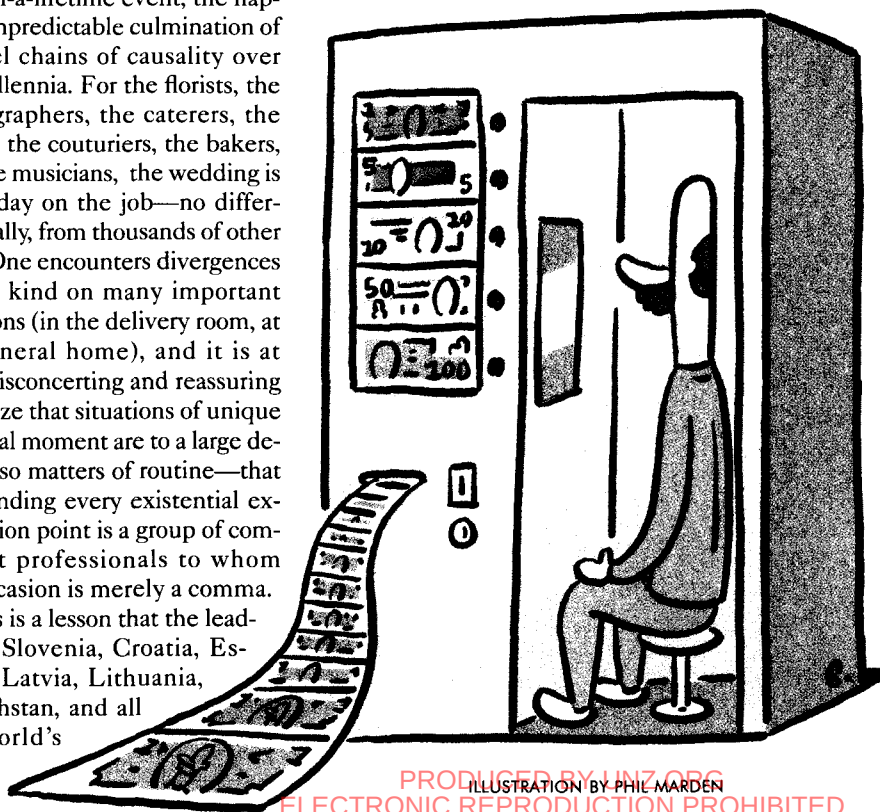
This is a lesson that the leaders of Slovenia, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, and all the world's

other new countries have in recent months been learning, possibly to their relief. However bloody or traumatic a country's path to independence, once independence has been achieved the world community matter-of-factly takes things in hand.

In New York the United Nations conducts orientation programs for the new country's delegation. The mayor's office assists with the arrangements for a headquarters and for housing, and provides maps and restaurant guides. In Montreal the International Civil Aviation Organization approves a three-letter call sign for use by the new country's airline. In Washington the State Department elevates to embassy what was once a consulate, and makes sure that the U.S. Army Band has on file an arrangement of the new country's national anthem.

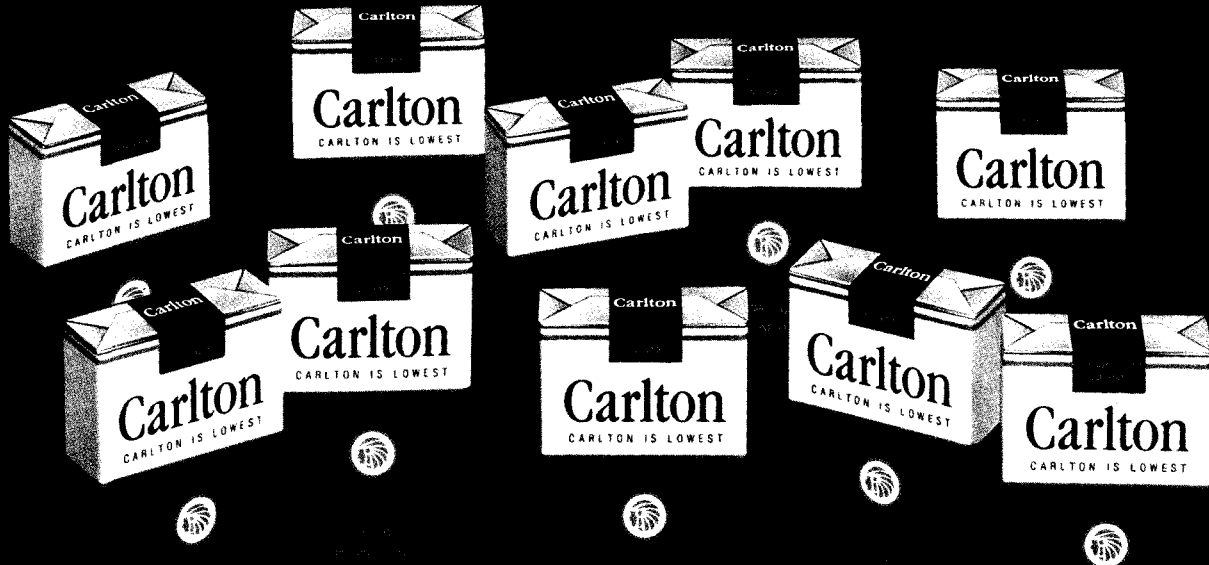
The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank send missions to the new country to offer economic advice and teach its leaders how to borrow large sums of money. At the National Geographic Society, cartographers make the appropriate changes on the large globe in Explorers Hall. Here and there, émigré groups issue announcements extolling the contributions of the new country's sons and daughters. Lawyers make themselves available to write the new country's constitution, soldiers to train its military, consultants to coach its office-seekers.

ONE OF THE most important services of which new countries may avail themselves—and almost always do—is the printing of money. A society may have gotten along for years with some homegrown currency regime, such as the use of large millstones for money by the Yap Islanders, but with the conferring of independence new countries invariably want something that can more easily be slipped to a customs inspector or a maitre d'. I hadn't realized it until recently, but no more than a few dozen countries actually print their own currencies. The rest—about a hundred and thirty countries—have to find someone to do the printing for them. As with other trappings of sovereignty, this turns out to be no problem: a handful of companies exist to do just that. The biggest, Thomas De La Rue, of London, prints currencies for about a hundred countries, including most of the members of the British Commonwealth. The United States Banknote Corporation, of New York, and Giesecke and Devrient, of



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EVENTS IN NEW YORK CITY

MAY

23-25, Memorial Day Celebration with concerts, a boat festival, and fireworks, South Street Seaport, (212) 669-9400

23-25 and 30-31, Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit, (212) 982-6255

25, Memorial Day Ceremony, Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Riverside Drive, (212) 267-1998

JUNE

1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Jazz Mondays, Central Park Zoo, (212) 861-6030

12, Flag Day Parade and celebration, City Hall Park to Fraunces Tavern Museum, (212) 425-1778

14, Bensonhurst Jewish Renaissance Street Festival, (718) 837-4061

14, Welcome Back to Brooklyn Street Festival, (718) 855-7882

14, Puerto Rican Day Parade, Fifth Avenue, (212) 431-0335

16-27, Free Metropolitan Opera performances, City Parks, (212) 362-6000

19-27, JVC Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall and other venues, (212) 787-2020

21, Lower East Side Jewish Festival, East Broadway, (212) 475-6200 x358

24-July 25, Midsummer Night Swing, "dancing under the stars," Fountain Plaza, Lincoln Center, (212) 875-5440

25 or 26, Three caravels arrive from Spain, New York Harbor, (212) 758-1492

This is only a sampling of what is happening in the city this season. For a more complete listing, call the New York Convention & Visitors Bureau at (212) 397-8222.

Munich, each print the currencies of about ten countries. The remaining business falls to manufacturers in Canada, France, the Netherlands, Argentina, and a few other places. It's a small, close-knit world. Several dozen artisans do all the engraving, a few mills supply all the paper, one company in Switzerland supplies most of the ink, and the printing is usually done on intaglio presses built by another Swiss company, Giori.

Business is plentiful for the currency-printing companies even when the world is relatively stable: because of normal wear and tear, each of the fifty billion or so banknotes in circulation at any one time must be replaced after about a year (sooner in tropical climes), at a cost of about two cents apiece. But, as one might imagine, periods of chaos can be a boon to the industry. A bout of hyperinflation or counterfeiting in a country can mean that all its currency must be replaced. Political upheaval can have the same result. After the Islamic revolution, in 1979, Iran decided that it wanted to replace all its paper money, because the money bore a portrait of the exiled Shah. After the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the former Eastern Bloc countries replaced money that displayed Communist symbols. Zambia will eventually be ordering new money now that Kenneth Kaunda, who appears on the old money, is gone from the presidency. This sort of turnover occurs fairly regularly.

The recent outbreak of nationhood is a more unusual development, nothing like it having been seen since the era of decolonization, in the 1950s and 1960s. Croatia, whose sovereignty has been recognized by the European Community, introduced its own currency, the dinar, late last year; Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are following suit with, respectively, the kroon, the lats, and the litas. The currency of all four countries is being printed abroad. Although the countries whose athletes made up the Unified Team at the Winter Olympics are sticking for the moment with the Russian ruble, no one will be surprised if some of them eventually place orders for new money. (Ukraine has a deal in the works with the Canadian Banknote Company.) The procedures are surprisingly simple. The new country provides its printer with a list of the denominations it needs and pictures of the strange animals and arcane luminaries that are

to grace the bills. It pays the company up front with some kind of real money. A few months later the country is in business, its cities awash in banknotes.

THE PROLIFERATION of support services for neo-nations makes one wonder: has the world, without giving any real thought to the matter, made it too easy for places to become countries? An argument has roiled social science for years about whether the U.S. welfare system encourages a variety of unwholesome behaviors, and it may be time to raise a similar question about the family of nations. Regardless of the answer, it does seem that ambitious people with a few million followers who look like them and talk like them are having progressively less difficulty getting diplomatic plates for the car.

I have no wish to undo what is done; places that have gone the route of grim self-determination should be allowed to live with the consequences. But it may be useful to adopt certain criteria that prospective new countries must hereinafter meet before being upgraded, in the eyes of the world, from provisional status to true sovereignty. Several come to mind. The country must have won an Olympic medal in an event that is not the bobsled or the luge. It must be home to a filmmaker whose lyrical evocation of childhood and loss was a sleeper at Cannes. It must have a locally famous rock star who sings in the native tongue. It must at some point in its history have produced an epic poem that can now be bought in a Penguin edition. It must have the national character to have produced a cadre of vocal dissidents, and the wisdom to have eventually packed them off to Berkeley. Its army must have served with distinction as a UN peacekeeping force—outside the country itself. Two of the army's commanders must be graduates of West Point or Sandhurst. A restaurant featuring the country's cuisine must exist somewhere in the United States outside New York City.

The likelihood that a geographic entity capable of meeting these few criteria will go on to become a burden seems highly remote. Upon receipt of a hard-currency bond to ensure payment of its diplomats' parking tickets abroad, we may safely say to such a place, Welcome to the club.

—Cullen Murphy

Where's the
gerilla?

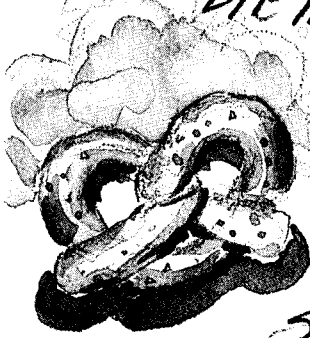


Chrysler Bldg.
42nd & Lex.

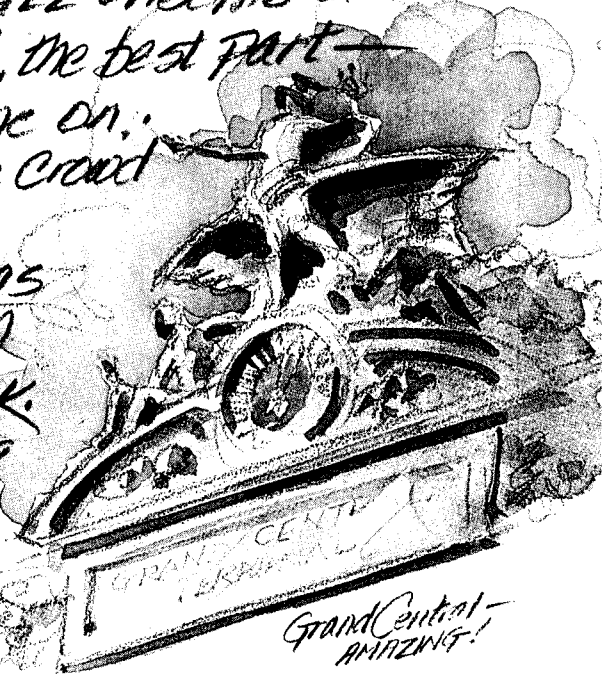
After the show,
we just headed down
Broadway and fell into
this charming Cappuccino
Place. We were both still
full from dinner, but we
couldn't resist, cozy little
booths... A jazz ensemble.

What a find. Oh, the best part—

they had this singer come on.
She was great. She had the whole crowd
singing. Then, she passed the mic
around and we all sang solos. It was
hysterical. We stayed till 1:45 in
the morning—and walked back.



There was this guy selling
paintings a few blocks
from the hotel... And
wouldn't you know, after
5 mos. of searching for



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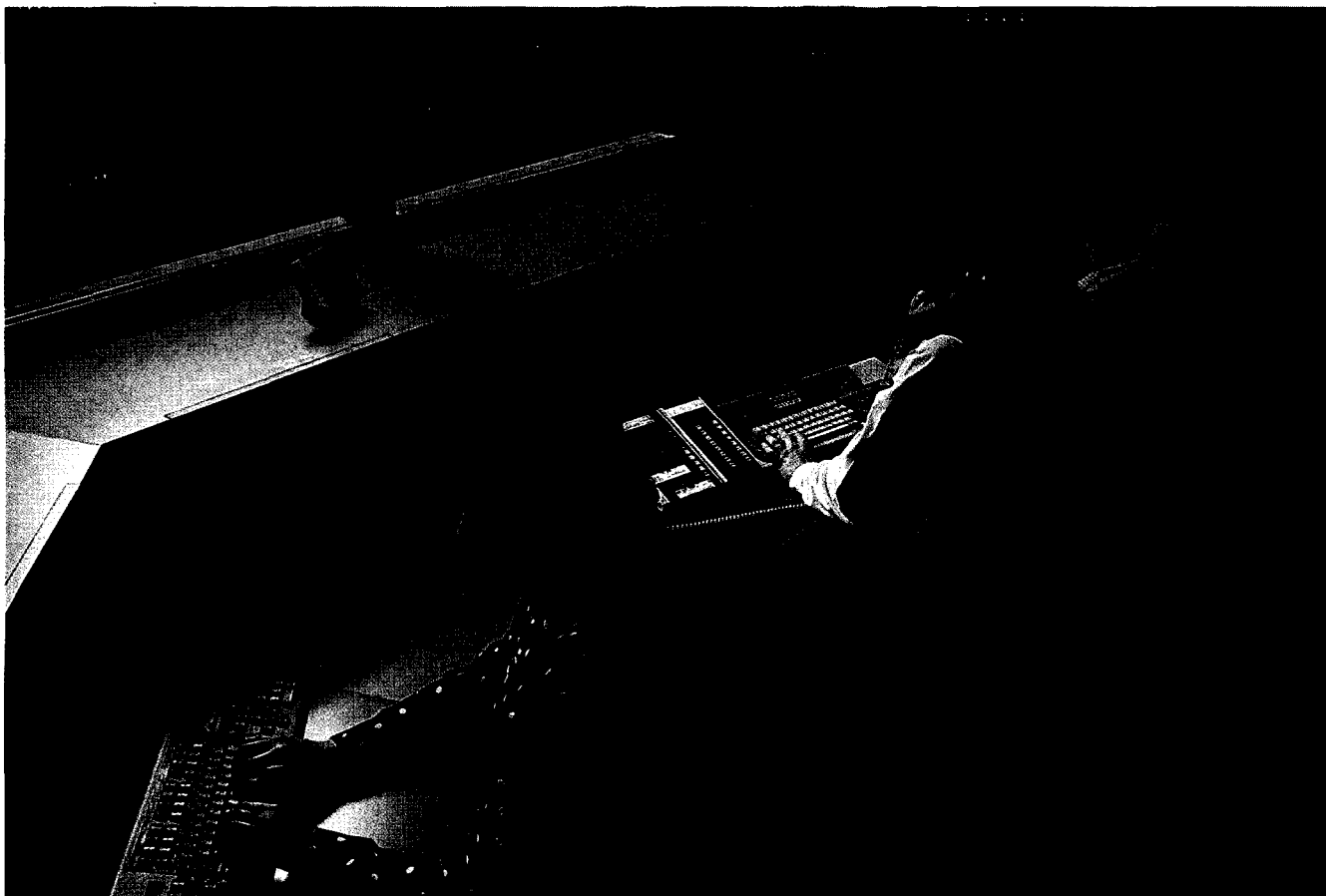
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1990s *Wal-Mart workers at a console in the company's headquarters, in Bentonville, Arkansas. They are tied by satellite to all of Wal-Mart's retail outlets and have instant access to inventories, delivery schedules, and other data*

BUSINESS

Adventures in the Food Chain

When Wal-Mart, the retail giant, begins selling groceries in small-town America, what's a Kroger to do?

THE NEW WAL-MART store in Batesville, Arkansas, was obviously supposed to be red, white, and blue, but the white paint dried a shade gray. You don't have to be an English major to find symbolism in that.

Many Americans intensely dislike Wal-Mart, but for every person who feels that way, twenty or more believe that Wal-Mart hung the moon. If you don't know what Wal-Mart is, just be patient. Sooner or later it will come your way.

Of course, if you're the proprietor of a store in small-town America, you hope it won't. Over the past thirty years Wal-Mart—the discount-store chain started by the late Sam Walton, of Bentonville, Arkansas—has systematically moved into small local-hub communities and provided customers with the kind of shopping experience they formerly had only dreamed about. Wal-Mart stores are big, modern, well-lighted places that carry everything from tires to toys to picture hangers to clothes, and all at what the company says are “everyday low prices.” As a result, Wal-Mart has siphoned market share from virtually every merchant on Main Street, U.S.A. In the process the chain has become the undisputed king of general-merchandise retailers, supplanting such giants as Sears and Kmart, and making Sam Walton a billionaire many times over.

Batesville, an energetic little hill-country town of ninety-two hundred and the seat of Independence County, had had a Wal-Mart store for years. But that store was closed and then essentially folded into the red, gray, and blue monster that roared to life one spring day last year and began pulling the community in all directions. If this had been merely another traditional

Wal-Mart opening, the event might have passed without notice: after all, 1,735 such stores are already in business, and, on average, another opens every other day. But the Batesville store was anything but a traditional Wal-Mart. It was gigantic, offering—in addition to



general merchandise—a snack counter, an auto-repair shop, a bank, a one-hour film processor, a hair salon, a photocopy center, a Miracle Ear outlet, and a portrait gallery. And it sold groceries.



The Batesville store was a Supercenter—only the sixth such store in the nation, after four in Missouri and one in Oklahoma. Until it opened, few people in Batesville had any inkling of the significance of Wal-Mart's opening a grocery store. But a handful of people did understand—the proprietors of the rural convenience stores in the surrounding area, and the managers of the supermarkets in Batesville proper. The person who probably understood best was John Ed Smith, the manager of the local Kroger store. Kroger, the nation's No. 1 supermarket chain, had long dominated the grocery business in Batesville. "Dominated" may be too strong a word; in fact Kroger had co-existed peacefully with Harvest Foods (formerly Safeway), Town and Country, Price Chopper, and the independent Dixie's Supermarket. Though Kroger owned the top market share, 21 percent, all the town's grocers enjoyed modest profits and the kind of cozy balance of power possible among businesspeople who are also neighbors.

But John Ed Smith understood—because the people at his company's headquarters, in Cincinnati, made sure he did—that Wal-Mart's entering the supermarket business was a major event. It was, in the words of a veteran grocer, "one of those revolutions that come from time to time, disrupting the market and changing the code of conduct of doing business."

Soon everybody in Batesville—and most people within a fifty-mile radius—understood too. Because Kroger didn't wait to be bludgeoned by Wal-Mart's everyday low prices. Before the Supercenter even opened, Smith took the offensive, slashing the price of a gallon of milk from \$2.59 to \$1.69. Wal-Mart's response was a gleeful ad in the local newspaper, *The Batesville Guard*: "WE'RE ALREADY LOWERING YOUR PRICES!"

Soon after the Supercenter opened, Kroger dropped milk to fifty-eight cents a gallon and bread to a nickel a loaf. This was only the beginning, however. What became known as the milk war lasted for sixteen brutal weeks, during which Kroger and Wal-Mart aggressively sold below-cost milk, cut-rate bread, rock-bottom bananas, and so on, and everybody else tried to compete without going broke. Most of the other supermarkets met the milk prices, but did so defensively

and with much kicking and screaming. The local milk distributor—who serviced the outlying convenience stores but not the majority of the supermarkets—saw his business decline 60 percent during that four-month period. Some of his customers lost 50 percent of their volume; they simply stood around dusting their unsold stock and watching cars zoom past on the Batesville highway.

Meanwhile, in Batesville, Harrison Avenue, the street that runs in front of the Supercenter, was becoming clogged with cars and trucks and even tour buses full of shoppers from out of town. People who lived on streets intersecting Harrison suddenly had to wait for what seemed like hours to make a simple left turn. By August 1, more than twelve weeks after Kroger's first major price cut, milk was steady at fifty-eight cents a gallon (after some early fluctuation), bread was at nine cents a loaf, and a pound of bananas was going for nineteen cents. A gallon of milk now regularly cost less than a pint of milk had just weeks earlier. Supermarkets hung out banners announcing triple coupon savings, and county farmers discovered that feeding their hogs milk was less expensive than buying the normal protein supplements.

Neighbor turned against neighbor—Smith and Paul Gollhofer, then the manager of Wal-Mart, are Kiwanis brothers ("I know John Ed, but business is business," Gollhofer said)—and eventually a pattern began to develop: most Batesville residents continued to buy their groceries at Kroger and the other grocery stores of long standing, and the people from out in the county went to Wal-Mart. But no matter who they were or where they bought, shoppers—especially those with either milk-guzzling teenagers or lots of hogs—were blinded by their good fortune. Even Batesville's mayor got caught up in the spoils of war. "I love milk," Mayor Jim Barnett (pronounced *Barn-et*) says, "and I drank more milk than I ever have. I didn't think about it early, but the worst effect was on the small stores."

John Ed Smith publicly took credit for bringing about this windfall. "What you see is what we've done," he told Frank Wallis, of the *Guard*. Before the summer was over, Kroger temporarily offered *free* milk, and Smith became the first POW of the conflict when he

was arrested for refusing to sell fifty gallons of milk to a customer, thereby violating an arcane state law that prohibits limits on purchases of dairy products. The charges were eventually dropped, and a convenience-store owner admitted that he and the local milk distributor had plotted the volume purchase in an attempt to stop the milk war that was killing them.

Eventually the war did stop, at just about the time a former Federal Trade Commission lawyer began making noises about calling in the feds to investigate below-cost pricing. Last March milk was at \$1.79—right at cost—and Batesville had settled back into a routine. Instead of putting anyone out of business, the Supercenter has contributed to a 12 percent increase in county sales tax revenues. In other words, Wal-Mart has expanded the market, and although no one is willing to give a market-share ranking anymore, Kroger is reportedly doing about the same dollar volume as before. Paul Gollhofer has retired, John Ed Smith has returned to business as usual, and Wal-Mart headquarters has shifted its attention to other Supercenters opening soon in other towns across America. Now, months after the end of the milk war, you'd be hard pressed to see that anything has happened here.

And yet something did happen. The question is, what?

TO ANSWER that, you have to know a little about the forces at work in John Ed Smith's life. Smith is a career grocery man, which means that every morning he gets up and unlocks the store and manages the merchandising of some forty-eight thousand items, trying to anticipate (or react to) the moods of fickle consumers while fighting off competitors, not just in other supermarkets but also in convenience stores, wholesale clubs, mass-merchandise stores like Kmart and Wal-Mart, and now in the Supercenters. Smith has a good day when he nets one cent on the dollar.

Stability has never been a hallmark of the retail food industry, for two main reasons: First, profit margins are frighteningly narrow. Taken together, supermarkets (defined as stores that generate at least \$2 million annually) and grocery stores produce \$640.2 billion in yearly sales. In 1990–1991 the indus-

try's net profit was 0.96 percent—less than a penny on the dollar. And second, the industry is caught between two notoriously unpredictable forces, the cost of food and the quirkiness of consumers. Rain in California or drought in Kansas can drive food prices through the roof, and higher prices can greatly affect consumer behavior. If the consumer walks, food spoils. No other industry has to provide such a constant and voluminous stream of vital, perishable, and affordable goods. The retail food industry can't wait for Christmas to bail it out; food is elemental, and that makes selling groceries a life-or-death matter for both the customers and the stores.

From the days of the earliest general stores, which sold a little of whatever consumer goods were available, somebody has always been trying to divine what the consumer is going to want next. So the general store found itself competing with the specialized store—the bakery, the butcher shop, the grocery store, the produce shop. Then, in the 1930s, hard times decreed lower prices, which required higher volume, which called for larger stores. A man named Michael Cullen came up with the idea for a “warehouse grocery,” essentially putting all those specialized stores back under one roof. But Cullen added other factors into the equation: low-rent location (such as an aban-

doned garage), night hours, self-service, and bold advertising. Mom-and-pop grocers felt, understandably, that these innovations placed them at an unfair disadvantage. Indeed, small grocers were essentially doomed: In 1930 the shopping cart was invented. By 1940 there were 6,000 supermarkets in the United States. Ten years later 14,000 had opened, and by 1960 the number was 30,000. For most of that time the economy was strong, and supermarket growth continued with little resistance. Then came the sixties. Inflation hit hard, and supermarkets had to devise gimmicks like trading stamps in order to hold on to penny-pinching customers. But other changes took place in life in the sixties: everything in American society seemed ready to be redefined.

Sam Walton started Wal-Mart in 1962. During the next twenty years supermarkets—which had responded slowly to the changing times—found themselves caught in yet another turn of the cycle. Consumers were making increasing use of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores. Meanwhile, mass merchandisers such as Wal-Mart and Kmart and Target were looking for

ways to realize retailing's mythic dream of one-stop shopping. Wal-Mart really took off in the seventies, saturating the South (where in some states the current ratio is one Wal-Mart store for every 40,000 people). Since then it has moved into the Midwest, the West, and, just recently, the Northeast. And as the company has expanded, its stores have steadily grown larger—from around 35,000 square feet in the seventies to between 60,000 and 90,000 in

the eighties and 115,000 at the beginning of the nineties. “There were two parts to their thinking,” Peter Monash, a retail consultant who has worked with Wal-Mart, says about the company's strategy in the early 1980s: “One, to allow customers more space to mill about, and two, to carry a limited number of food items, such as ketchup, coffee, snack foods.” So began the process that has culminated in the Supercenters.

A rule of thumb in the retail business is that the gross margin on food is lower than the margin on general merchandise, which means that if you want to make money on food, you do it with volume. In 1983 Wal-Mart intensified



1970s *This Grand Bazaar supermarket, in Chicago, was said during the mid-1970s to be America's largest food store. The 1970s saw the expansion of supermarkets into “superstores” offering a variety of specialty departments*

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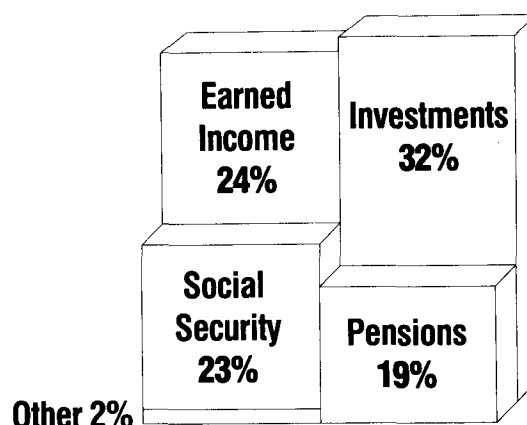
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1950s *Supermarkets like this one opened at the rate of three a day in 1950, and by 1960 sold three fifths of all food bought by U.S. households*

its invasion of the retail food industry by launching Sam's Clubs. These are 105,000- to 130,000-square-foot warehouse stores where, for a membership fee of \$25 a year, customers can stock up on everything from TVs and overcoats to oatmeal and diapers. Then, beginning in 1987, Wal-Mart went mega, opening a handful of the aptly named Hypermart USAs, 225,000-square-foot behemoths that were originally explored as the Wal-Marts of the future. Hypermarts—which have since yielded to the more manageable Supercenters—are nothing short of undivided malls with common checkout counters. The idea is, you back your truck up to the door and take home four hundred pounds of steak and a freezer to put it in.

Among supermarketers, clubs and mass merchandisers are known as “alternative store formats” (also included are “deep-discount pharmacies,” which now sell many items traditional to supermarkets). Alternative store formats are what the John Ed Smiths of the country spend sleepless nights contemplating. Last January, at the midwinter executive conference of the Food Marketing Institute, an association repre-

senting fifteen hundred food retailers and wholesalers, supermarket executives heard the bad news about how these aliens have invaded their turf: In 1986 the grocery-related volume of the alternative stores had reached \$8.2 billion; by 1991 it had reached \$25.6 billion. On an average day a club can deliver a 26 percent price advantage for a grocery basket of goods available at both clubs and supermarkets; a mass merchandiser can deliver a 15 percent advantage. Sixty percent of a club's sales are in grocery-related products. Alternative formats have already stolen supermarkets' dominance in paper goods and health and beauty products, and they are about to do the same in coffee, soft drinks, snacks, pet supplies, and laundry and cleaning items.

If alternative retailers can inflict that much damage without, for the most part, even owning full grocery stores, imagine how much havoc the Supercenters are going to wreak.

ON A WEDNESDAY morning at the Batesville Supercenter a few dozen senior citizens sit in the snack shop playing bingo and eating doughnuts, courtesy of Wal-Mart. One woman wins a blanket, another a basket of fruit. The games go for an hour every Wednesday, beginning at 8:00 A.M. Players are usually lined up in the parking lot by 7:45.

But as you walk the aisles of this cavernous structure, you can't miss the reminders that Wal-Mart didn't come here just to show people a good time. Banners proclaiming “WE'LL MATCH IT!” (any competitor's advertised price) hang from the roof supports. The shelves are a patchwork of red-marked price signs, showing Kroger's price and then Wal-Mart's: Popsicle Banana—Kroger \$2.25, Wal-Mart \$1.75. DM Spinach—Kroger 71¢, Wal-Mart 59¢. Kosher spears—Kroger \$2.09, Wal-Mart \$1.78. Liquid Tide with Bleach—Kroger \$5.69, Wal-Mart \$3.97. At the check-out counter a basket of items on display reminds you how silly it is to shop a competitor and then come here to have the price matched; why not just shop at Wal-Mart and get everyday low prices?

Over at Kroger, Smith is doing what he can to compete. Instead of everyday low prices, he—like most supermarketers—uses a high-low pricing strategy, in which weekly specials play an important role in drawing customers to the store. Figuring out how to make money with a supermarket used to be easier than it is today. When Michael Cullen started the first supermarket, he devised a formula of so many items at cost, so many at plus five percent, so many at plus fifteen percent, and so

many at plus twenty percent. “Today there are no formulas,” says Tim Hammonds, the vice president of research for the Food Marketing Institute. “Supermarkets carry general merchandise now, and the mark-up is higher on toasters than on groceries. That's why you can't

devise a formula.”

Also, electronic scanning, which came in during the eighties—and which brought greater efficiency to supermarkets—has added a certain manic





Fair Dinkum^{*} Australia.



***fair dinkum/** — *Colloq. — adj.* 1: true, genuine, dinkum <are you fair dinkum?> — *interj.* 2: assertion of truth or genuineness <it's true, mate, fair dinkum>
3: Come have a fair dinkum great time in Australia.

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11 GIANTIC MARKETS 11

There's the New York

QUEEN'S BOULEVARD

Near Woodhaven Blvd.

ELMHURST, LONG ISLAND

Plenty of Parking Space

Don't Miss A Single Page

1930s *The first supermarket in the United States was the King Kullen that opened in Jamaica, New York, in 1930. Supermarkets faced a by now familiar charge: that they represented unfair competition*

quality to the business of stocking and pricing. "The problem is," Robert Messenger writes in *Prepared Foods* magazine,

the time period for a product to succeed has been condensed because so many items are competing for the same slot. If a product, through scanning data, does not show significant early results, it can end up discontinued. Given more time to compete, it might succeed.

That passage contains an eerie echo of the fire that network television programmers came under in the early eighties. We all know what has happened to the networks.

Wal-Mart, however, seems firm and focused, and that gives the company amazing strength. In the David and Goliath story, Goliath is terrifying because of his brute size. In the grocery industry, Wal-Mart is terrifying because it has attained the size of Goliath by being as nimble as David. "One reason Wal-Mart is so successful," the consultant Peter Monash says, "is that they've figured out how to lower the cost of doing business—payroll, insurance, what have you. Of the three major retailers, Sears's cost of doing business is in the low thirty-percent range, which means that thirty-something cents of every dollar goes to

overhead. Kmart's percentage is in the low twenties. Wal-Mart's is fifteen-point-two percent." Few industry observers doubt that Wal-Mart can transfer this leanness to food retailing—a leanness that allows the company to pass on savings to the customer, which in turn attracts more business, which in turn lowers the cost of doing business.

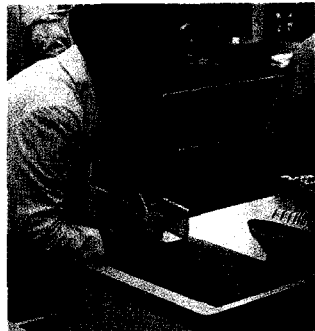
The company's vaunted efficiency takes many forms, but the sum of its parts is self-sufficiency. For one thing, Wal-Mart reduces its dependence on branded products by creating its own private-label brands. Company buyers wield the huge stick of centralized purchasing, which, with such volume, rapidly whips manufacturers into line. More important, though, Wal-Mart has invested heavily in a space-age technology that improves distribution and ensures that each store can respond quickly to customers' needs. "Wal-Mart has the largest privately owned satellite system in the U.S.," John Cook, of McKinsey & Company, a consulting firm, told the assembled (and presumably trembling) supermarketiers at the FMI winter meeting.

"Each store transmits scanning results and other data to Bentonville, the headquarters, where senior management can broadcast messages back to the store. Some manufacturers have

hooked directly into this system and are working to drive factory production off retail sales." In other words, the computer tells the manufacturer which items are moving and which are not, so that production can be planned accordingly.

Wal-Mart is still learning the grocery business—whose critical distinguishing feature is perishables—but no one expects it to fail. "What?" says Arthur Markowitz, of *Discount Store News*. "You think they're suddenly going to get dumb when they've been so smart?" Last year Wal-Mart bought retail food expertise in the form of a twenty-store grocery chain, and now most observers say the company need only work out the bugs. Also, the Supercenters are much closer than the urban Hypermarts to Sam Walton's original vision: "Going into small towns where people have no place else to go," as Peter Monash puts it, "and being king of the hill." Supercenters are intended to draw from a radius of thirty to sixty miles; a 1987 market study puts the number of people within fifty miles of Batesville at 184,000. "The economics of these stores are not yet clear," John Cook told the FMI audience, "but if they are successful, Wal-Mart, with its resources, could grow them rapidly and potentially change the way America shops for groceries."

In the retail food industry, stores typically meet new competition with a price war (though, as Dixie Carpenter, of Batesville, says, "after about four





weeks, everybody usually settles back to normal"). But the Wal-Mart threat is seen as potentially cataclysmic. The Batesville Kroger is the first supermarket to come out swinging. In 1988, when Wal-Mart opened its first Supercenter, in Washington, Missouri, the local independent IGA supermarket elected to close rather than face that kind of competition.

A story like that tends to provoke the question that has been asked about Wal-Mart in thousands of towns across America: Is it fair? Should a company be so large and powerful? Should anybody have such deep pockets that he can sell certain items below cost seemingly forever, possibly forcing others out of business in the process?

"I've heard lots of people say that Wal-Mart is disruptive and destructive to a community," says an attorney on the staff of the FTC's Bureau of Competition, "that they go in and use predatory pricing to put others out of business and that once they've established dominance, they then reap the rewards of monopoly. However, no one has ever come forward with proof of that pattern of behavior. If someone did, of course, it would be grounds for concern. But unless they are clearly anti-competitive—i.e., predatory—

the feeling is they shouldn't be challenged, because the consumer will benefit in the long run."

The people asking the fairness question are usually either outsiders, such as journalists, or store owners facing imminent extinction. But retail food people seem to accept the rules of their rough-and-tumble game: Live by the markdown, die by the markdown. "Anything is fair in love and war and business," says Jake Foster, a former employee of Armour and then of Wetterau, and a former owner of an IGA store. Foster retired, went home to Pocahontas, Arkansas, and bought two grocery stores, which he has since turned over to his children. "I wish Japan didn't sell cars in the U.S.," he says, "but I don't know how to stop them. Where are you going to draw the line in a free market?"

"The morality of the whole thing depends on where your sympathies lie," Peter Monash says. "If you're for the consumer, don't you want him to have the lowest prices? If so, and if Wal-Mart

is out to be the best purchasing agent for the customer, then they're doing a great job. But if you're for the small merchant, who has a wife and a kid and a dog and is being put out of business, it's tough."

In fact, the retail food industry is about as good a place as any to observe natural selection in action. You know that picture showing a huge fish about to eat a smaller fish which in turn is about to eat an even tinier fish? Put white supermarket aprons on those fish

and you've got the retail food industry. What we saw in Batesville, then, in spite of the local Kroger's apparently successful struggle to remain profitable, was the supermarket industry in a death frenzy, its corporate life flashing before its eyes.

OTHER SUCH spectacles will occur as Wal-Mart rolls out its Supercenters. By the end of 1992 more than twenty of the giant stores will be open, in such towns as Tupelo, Mississippi; Yukon, Oklahoma; and Pittsburg, Kansas. Though Wal-Mart

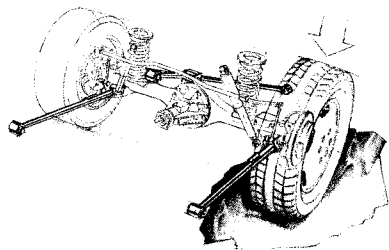


1920s Before the supermarket revolution, food retailing in America was a decentralized affair: an economic sector made up of bakeries, victuallers, milkmen, fruit and vegetable stands, and grocery stores like the one above

THE 5TH UNWRITTEN LAW
OF DRIVING

IF THERE IS A HOLE IN THE ROAD YOU WILL HIT IT.

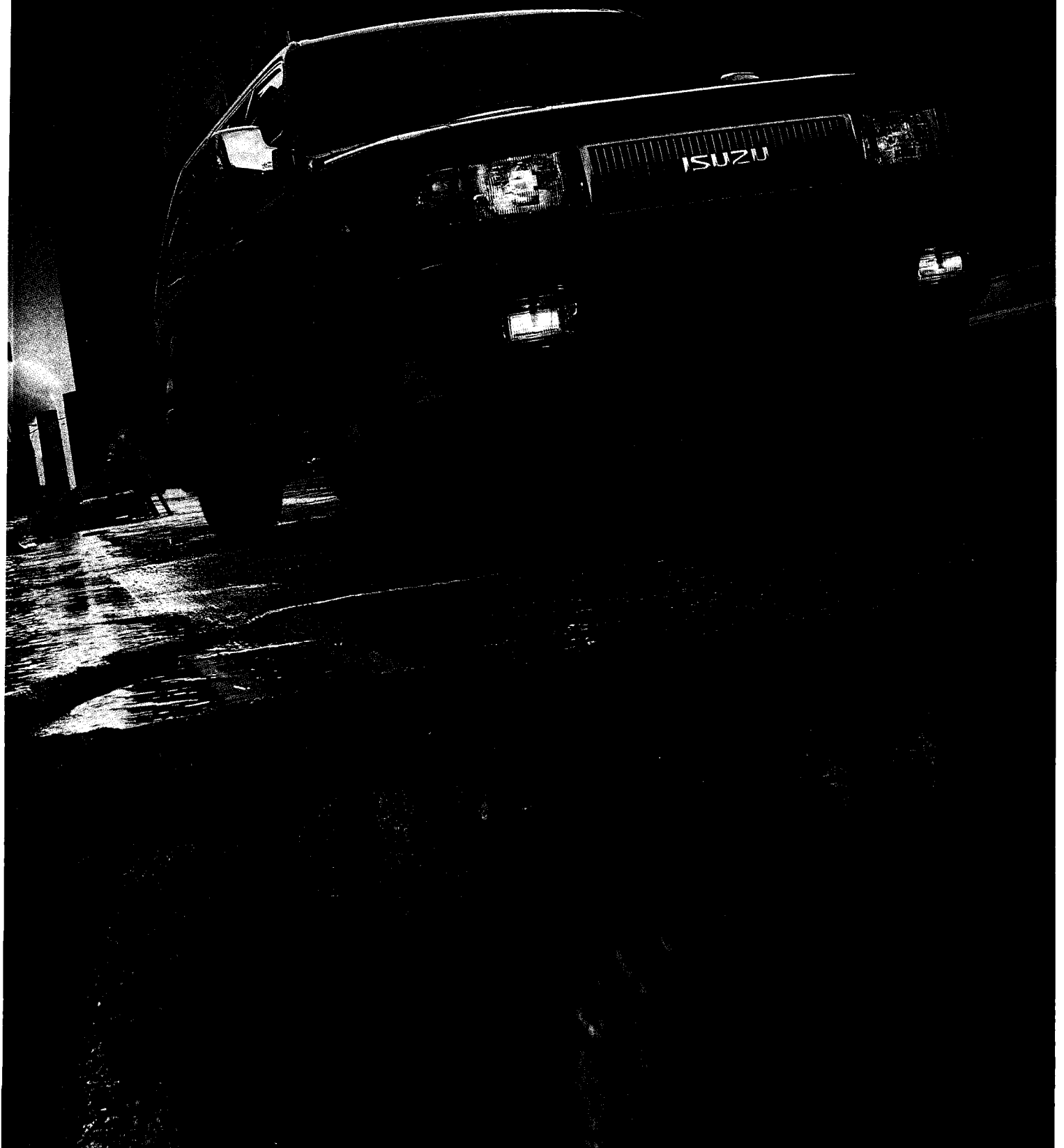
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won't confirm it, speculation is that three hundred Supercenters will be operating by 1997.

And so now may be the time for other chains to fly in the face of the mega trend. "Niche marketing is the name of the game," Tim Hammonds says. "Wal-Mart can't be all things to all people," adds Woody Whyte, an analyst who follows Wal-Mart for Stephens Incorporated. "Kroger, and others, may have to rethink their market strategy. They may have to relinquish some of the Batesvilles and go smaller but more high end. They need to get out of the path of the steamroller."

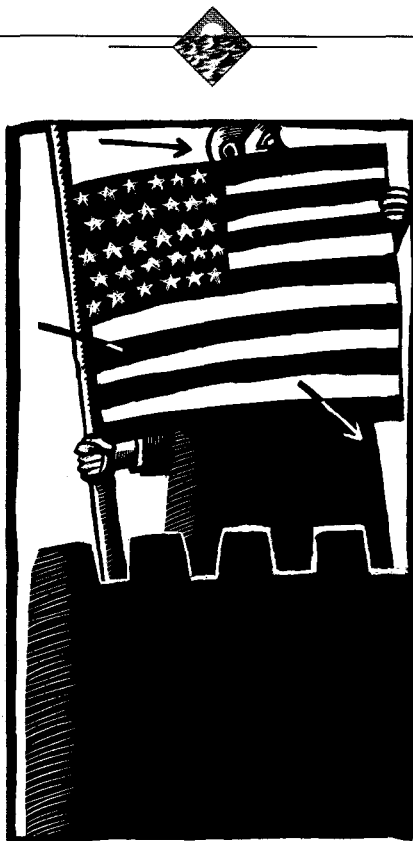
Jake Foster, who knew Sam Walton (who died last April after a long illness), can imagine another future. "For all that's said about Walton, I believe he was in the business for the pleasure of doing business, not to put others out. But as the company grows and goes on without him, the positive influence of his personal style is bound to diminish." In fact, Wal-Mart is already beginning to show signs of arrogance: This is a company built on down-home values, and yet phone calls don't ever seem to get returned. In the field brisk, blow-dried, home-office types swagger self-importantly through the Batesville aisles, a far cry from the image of Sam Walton in his \$70 suit.

In this survival-of-the-fittest business, hubris has relegated more than one player to the endangered-species list. "Why did A&P *used to be* number one?" Foster says. "Why Safeway?" He has an answer: "It's because they rested on their laurels."

Out there on the horizon, Foster says, are Home Depot and Office Warehouse, the so-called "category killers." If Wal-Mart Supercenters are today's general store incarnate, these huge single-category warehouse stores are the boutiques of the future. They represent the same old cycle, only bigger.

"Home Depot handles a significant percentage of what Wal-Mart handles," Foster says. "Wal-Mart's eventually going to have to change its mix. And that's why the consumer doesn't bother looking too far down the road. We're a *now* society. We have confidence in the market. We know that if Wal-Mart puts somebody out of business, somebody else will come along and put Wal-Mart out."

—James Morgan



WASHINGTON

Taking the Offensive

The case for major changes in the way the United States confronts terrorism

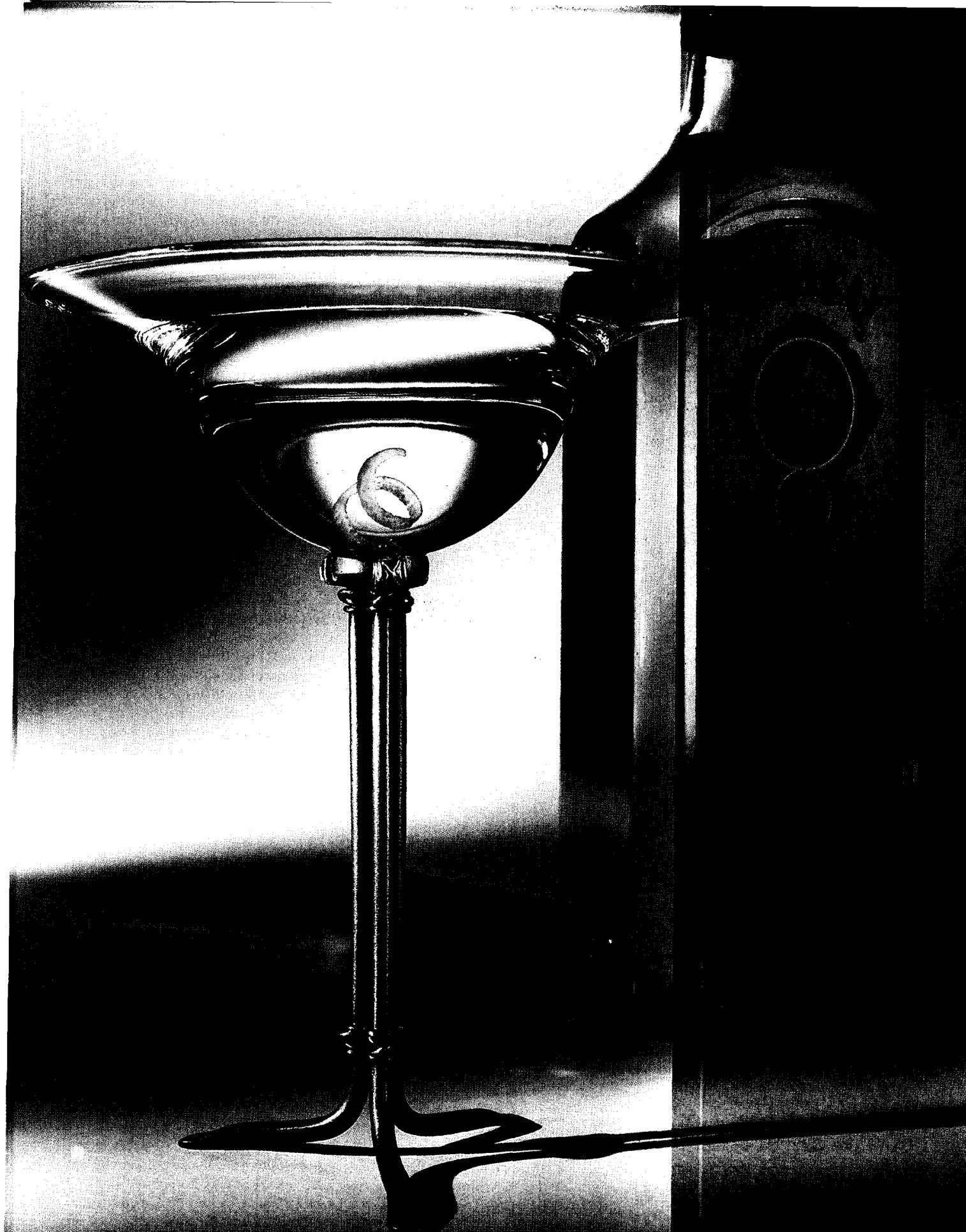
WHAT APPEARS to be a remarkable quietude in the activity of the world's terrorist groups should not be taken as a sign that the scourge of international terrorism has ended. To be sure, the dramatic changes in political and military balances around the world—from the collapse of communism to the rending of the Arab world which resulted from the Persian Gulf War—have not left terrorist groups unaffected. But whereas some of the objectives of terrorist groups and the infrastructure that makes their activities possible may have undergone important changes, terrorism remains as potent a threat as ever. Terrorism specialists in and out of government believe that the apparent calm of the past year or so may be only the prelude to yet another, more dangerous outbreak of terrorist attacks.

This need not be the case. For, para-

doxically, changes in the world which make terrorist movements potentially more deadly also make it possible to undercut the terrorist threat more effectively. But undercutting it would require that the United States move away from its predominantly defensive approach to terrorism. It would also require us to decide how much weight ought to be placed on the right of people to be safe from wanton violence when protection of that right runs afoul of other foreign-policy objectives. Reorienting our policy regarding terrorism would be costly, in terms of both dollars and politics, but the potential rewards are considerable. A debate over strategy is taking place within the small community of U.S. policy-makers responsible for fighting terrorism, which is scattered throughout the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the National Security Council, the intelligence agencies, and national law-enforcement organizations.

IN LATE January and early February of last year, in the midst of the air campaign against Iraq, counterterrorism planners in the Pentagon drafted a recommendation for the senior decision-makers in the war effort, in favor of direct strikes against the known haunts of terrorist leaders in Iraq. In the months preceding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, U.S. intelligence analysts had watched as terrorists such as Abu Nidal, Abu Abbas, and Abu Ibrahim gathered in Baghdad as guests of Saddam Hussein. At the same time, the Iraqi President was observed to be repairing his links to other leading terrorists—George Habbash, Nayef Hawatmeh, Ahmed Jibril, and the organization Hizbollah, fifteen of whose members Saddam Hussein brought back to Iraq from a Kuwaiti prison after Iraq invaded. Reports in the Western press of these developments gave early credibility to the fear that any hostile move against Iraq by the United States would bring about an eruption of terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and corporate interests, and against U.S. allies.

After the war began, the Pentagon's counterterrorism planners saw an opportunity. Intelligence work had tracked some of the terrorist leaders as they fled Baghdad for the relative safety of the countryside. The precision of sophisticated U.S. weaponry could be



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used, some officials argued, in selective strikes against terrorist camps in the context of a war that was enjoying popular support at home. This would send a signal that the United States would not hesitate to strike against terrorists and the states that supported them. The Pentagon planners' recommendation was simple: Attack now.

The answer that came back down the chain of command was no. In the midst of war, the White House remained cautious about pushing too far beyond the United Nations mandate. Even if the opportunity existed to hobble some of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in existence, the possible political costs were seen to weigh yet more heavily. For example, Syria, long on the State Department's list of sponsors of terrorism but by now a key partner in the coalition against Saddam Hussein, might take exception. Officials also feared a spate of terrorist reprisals. And there was grave concern—voiced chiefly by the military—about the possibility of civilian casualties. These would have unpredictable but certainly negative effects on the political consensus supporting the coalition.

It is hard to say, even now, whether the decision not to strike was a proper one. It is possible that a single error in a mission broadened to fight not only Saddam Hussein but also his terrorist allies could have had devastating consequences. By the same token, it may be that a strike could have effectively eliminated Middle East terrorism as a threat to innocent civilians for the foreseeable future. The decision to hold fire illustrates the constraints the United States faces in fighting back against terrorism.

THE UNITED STATES has always condemned terrorism publicly. On occasion, as in the April, 1986, retaliatory raid on Libya for its support of terrorist attacks against Americans in Western Europe, the country has even struck back militarily—with some success. But any effort to retaliate has always been subservient to what are typically described as the larger foreign-policy objectives of the United States. When the Cold War dictated many of those objectives, U.S. counterterrorist actions were leashed by concern over how Moscow would respond—in large measure because most of the states abetting terrorists

were allies or clients of the Soviet Union.

As a result, the response of the United States to terrorism became, almost by default, a defensive one. Rather than focus on the sources of terrorist violence, we sought to protect ourselves against the symptoms, whether through increased security measures in airports, better cooperation among intelligence services and law-enforcement agencies (both within the United States and in concert with other countries), or the installation of concrete barriers in front of our embassies abroad. While the United States didn't often take the offensive itself, it sometimes provided information and assistance to those who did take the offensive (particularly the Israelis).

This defensive approach can claim a number of victories, many of which have been, and will remain, unheralded. Terrorist movements have been monitored and analyzed with increasing precision, and many potentially devastating attacks have been quietly thwarted. (In late January of last year, for example, coordination between U.S. and Thai officials resulted in the detention in Bangkok of three Arab nationals who had been linked to the building of explosive devices, presumably for use against Western targets.) But the defensive strategy toward terrorism has, in essence, made us sitting ducks. It has not deterred terrorists from trying again and again, or from developing more technically advanced—and more lethal—methods of violence. The defensive posture has also done nothing to diminish the incentive for terrorists to try to shock their victims into compliance: whereas target countries must succeed every time in protecting themselves, terrorists have to succeed in their objectives only sporadically. One bombing of an airplane, one machine-gunning of a synagogue, one assassination of a public official, demonstrates anew the terrorists' ability to penetrate a country's defenses.

Our defensive approach has cost us in other ways as well. Western intelligence has frequently had to sit and simply watch terrorists buying arms, establishing safe houses, financing operatives. For years before the Bank of Credit and Commerce International was shut down, British intelligence officials were aware that more than forty accounts at the London branches of the bank were under the direct control of



customers like Abu Nidal and his associates. It is possible—indeed, it is likely—that the Bank of England was restrained from taking early action against the fraudulent BCCI because of the intelligence community's interest in maintaining a source of information about Abu Nidal's activities and plans. During its years of association with the BCCI, Abu Nidal's organization alone was responsible for the injury or death of hundreds of civilians in a variety of terrorist attacks.

ANALYSTS OF terrorism in both government and academe look with growing concern on the dozens of emerging potential sources of terrorist violence: the fractious postwar Arab world, and the resentment toward the United States in much of it; spreading ethnic and nationalistic tensions in Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere; and new alliances between terrorist groups and drug lords on several continents. This is hardly an exhaustive list. The specialty literature, as encountered in such journals as *Terrorism* and *Comparative Strategy*, fairly brims with reports and analyses of emerging movements. Not all are of equal importance, and some pose no threat to the United States. But the United States has interests in every part of the world where terrorism is rife.

Some features of terrorism are sure to remain familiar. Whatever the specific objectives of terrorist groups, most of them will still perceive a reason to attack U.S. nationals and U.S. interests. Frequently the United States is targeted simply because of its dominance in international political and economic arenas; it is seen as the guarantor of whatever status quo terrorist movements seek to destroy. And whoever their specific victims may be, terrorists are always mindful of the global presence of the U.S. media.

But other features are changing. It may cease to be true that terrorists almost never harm Americans except overseas. The "reach" of terrorist attacks—that is, the distance between where they are planned and where they take place—has grown steadily over the past two decades, in large part because of the training, infrastructural support (safe houses, falsified passports, intelligence), and weapons and explosives made available to terrorist movements by the clandestine services

of the former communist regimes in Eastern Europe, notably East Germany and Czechoslovakia. (A few years ago Libya secretly bought a thousand tons of the sophisticated explosive Semtex from the Czechoslovakian government; it took only about a pound to blow Pan Am Flight 103 out of the sky over Scotland.)

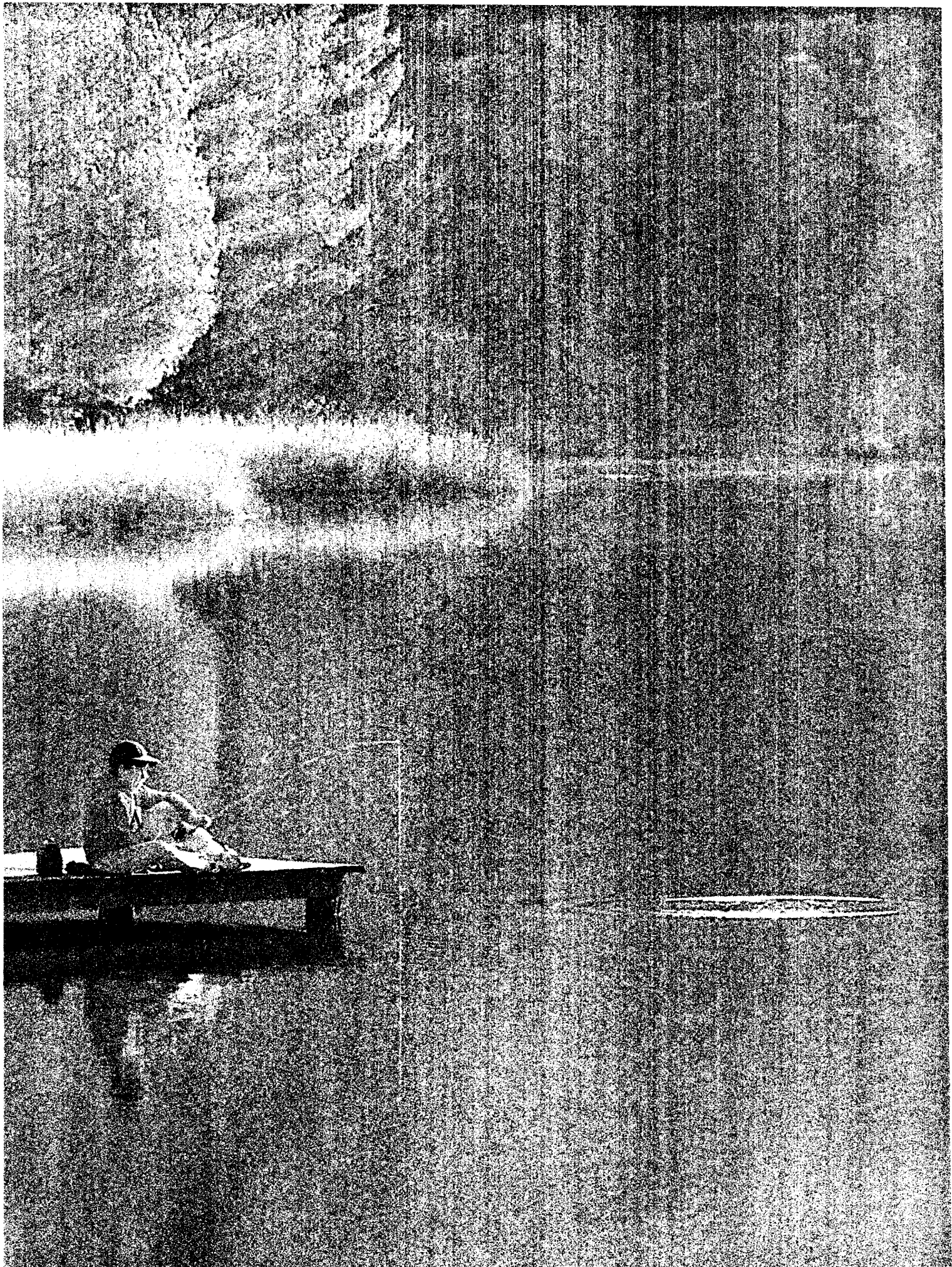
Terrorism is cheap, and yesterday's sponsor states were providing nothing that tomorrow's can't afford. With the end of the systematic assistance provided by the KGB and its Eastern European subsidiaries, terrorism's international support network is not eroding so much as evolving. Sponsor states like Iraq, Libya, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, and Syria—already at work acquiring more lethal weapons for their own arsenals—are no longer hemmed in by the larger policy calculations of their patrons in the Kremlin. Syria, which these days is supposed to be on its best behavior, continues to harbor the terrorist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command. Many analysts of terrorism's symbiotic sponsor-client relationships believe that the sponsor states will use their clients as private armies in protracted conflicts against rivals for regional dominance, as well as to settle scores against the larger Western powers that thwart their aspirations. Keeping track of these groups is not easy. In

the old, familiar Cold War days we understood fairly well how the network operated, who supplied the wherewithal, and what groups were supported by which states. We no longer always do.

Even if the negotiations among Israel, its Arab neighbors, and the Palestinians conclude in an agreement, there will be extremists on all sides determined to ensure that the agreement fails. Probably the only thing these groups will agree on is the identity of the party most responsible for bringing about a negotiated settlement, and hence the party most worthy of their violent attentions: the United States. This is only part of the picture. A number of reports suggest a growing threat from terrorist groups that have ties with, and receive support from, drug traffickers—not only in Latin America but also in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Northern Ireland. As early as 1984 State Department officials were warning of an increasingly close connection between narcotics producers and terrorist groups. (One such group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, received support from the regime of Manuel Noriega until his ouster, in 1989, and continues to receive aid from the Castro regime.) Peru's notoriously violent Shining Path is also involved in the drug trade. Terrorist groups with ties to drug traffickers are the ones most likely to be the first to commit major acts of terrorist violence in the mainland United States, against law-enforcement targets or even civilian ones. The drug barons have already carried out assassinations in this country. They hold a key advantage: they already know how to penetrate the borders of the United States. They command an infrastructure and transportation network that could be used as easily for smuggling in the implements of terrorism as for smuggling in drugs.

Wherever terrorism occurs, new tactics and technologies will help terrorists enjoy maximum reach for minimum relative cost. Explosives and detonating devices are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Highly complex "improvised explosive devices" (or IEDs, in the jargon of the trade), such as the one used by Libyan agents to destroy Pan Am Flight 103, remain virtually undetectable, despite the enormous resources devoted to airline security. Chemical and biological





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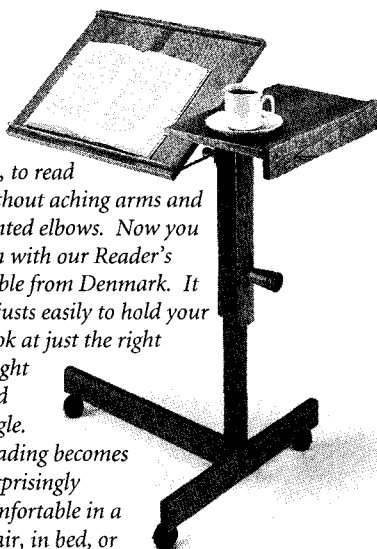
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weapons are probably already available to terrorist groups. Access to nuclear devices, which could be held for ransom even if not used as weapons, is not out of the question, given the chaos in the former Soviet republics.

IF THESE SIGNS point toward a more widespread and deadlier terrorist threat in the future, they also point to an increasingly exposed and vulnerable sort of terrorism. Sponsor states, no longer fettered by their ties to the Soviet Union, have more freedom to take unilateral action, but they have also lost the shield that the Cold War provided. Although these countries are ambitious, few of them are economically capable of risking complete isolation for any extended period of time. As a result, terrorism's sponsors are a good deal more susceptible than they once were to strong counterterrorist action. It is this fact that underlies the thinking of those who would abandon the purely defensive approach to fighting terrorism.

Most of the front-rank sponsor states of the 1990s confront difficult economic circumstances. The dictators who rule these states essentially have two choices. They can strive for regional hegemony—intimidating neighbors, destabilizing moderate regimes nearby, launching the occasional war; or they can seek to find a role to play in global trade and finance, with a view to strengthening their economies. It is in the interest of the United States to encourage actual and potential sponsor states to choose the second path. But all too often states have been permitted to claim adherence to the second path even as they pursue the first, using terrorism as a principal instrument.

In practical terms, an active counterterrorism policy means that the United States cannot continue to have it both ways with nations identified as sponsors of terrorism. The Department of State maintains a list of sponsor nations, and inclusion on it should entail not merely the temporary discomfort of an annual press conference but economic and political sanctions—cutting off aid and trade, closing down sources of credit, freezing assets in U.S. banks, recalling diplomats, and building coalitions of like-minded states willing to do the same. Unless some kind of meaningful penalty is associated with being branded a sponsor of terrorism, there's little point in even maintaining the list.

In fact, it undermines U.S. credibility.

An active counterterrorism policy also means that the United States must be willing to act—and act first—in order to frustrate and punish terrorists. The counterterrorism capabilities of U.S. military forces have been greatly refined and enhanced during the past decade. U.S. special-operations forces made a significant contribution toward ensuring the unprecedented speed of Iraq's military collapse. They should be used. When storage sites for terrorism's weapons can be located, they should be destroyed. When training facilities can be located, they should be put out of business. When safe houses where terrorists take refuge can be located, they should be raided. The United States should redouble its efforts to monitor the movements of terrorists and, whenever possible, intercept them. Sponsor states should be made to understand that if they refuse to cooperate in counterterrorist efforts, the United States will act unilaterally with military force—if necessary, against sites within their borders. U.S. efforts in developing intelligence capabilities should emphasize more strongly the penetration of terrorist cells, by recruiting more spies. The more frequently the United States and its allies can preempt terrorist attacks, the greater will be the deterrent effect.

Some who object to the adoption of a stronger, more offensive counterterrorism policy argue that it would undermine other foreign-policy objectives. In fact the truth is probably the other way around: other U.S. interests have frequently been undermined by the failure to take a firm stand against terrorism by means of well-defined, consistently applied sanctions. Unquestionably the most significant terrorism-related damage that was done to the United States in the 1980s was self-inflicted—entering into an arrangement with Iran that, however indirectly, resulted in trading arms for hostages. It is no surprise that one immediate consequence of this enterprise was the seizure of more hostages. It is conceivable that the damage to U.S. credibility caused by this single act was enough to make Saddam Hussein believe that an attack on Kuwait would be worth the risk. Our other foreign-policy interests have not, in short, been well served by our unwillingness to take a consistent stand against terrorism. Once it is ac-



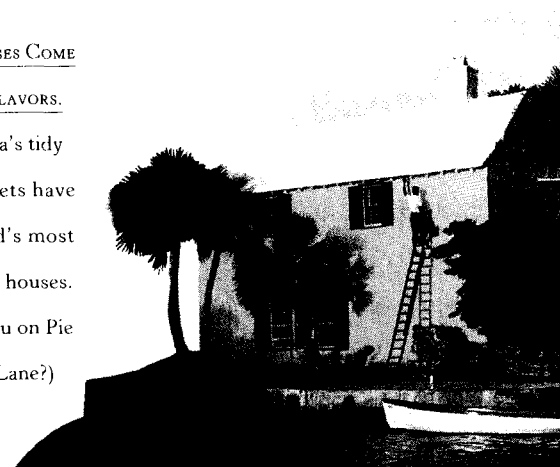
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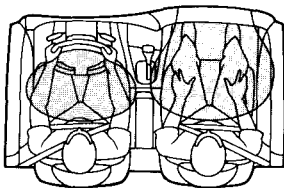
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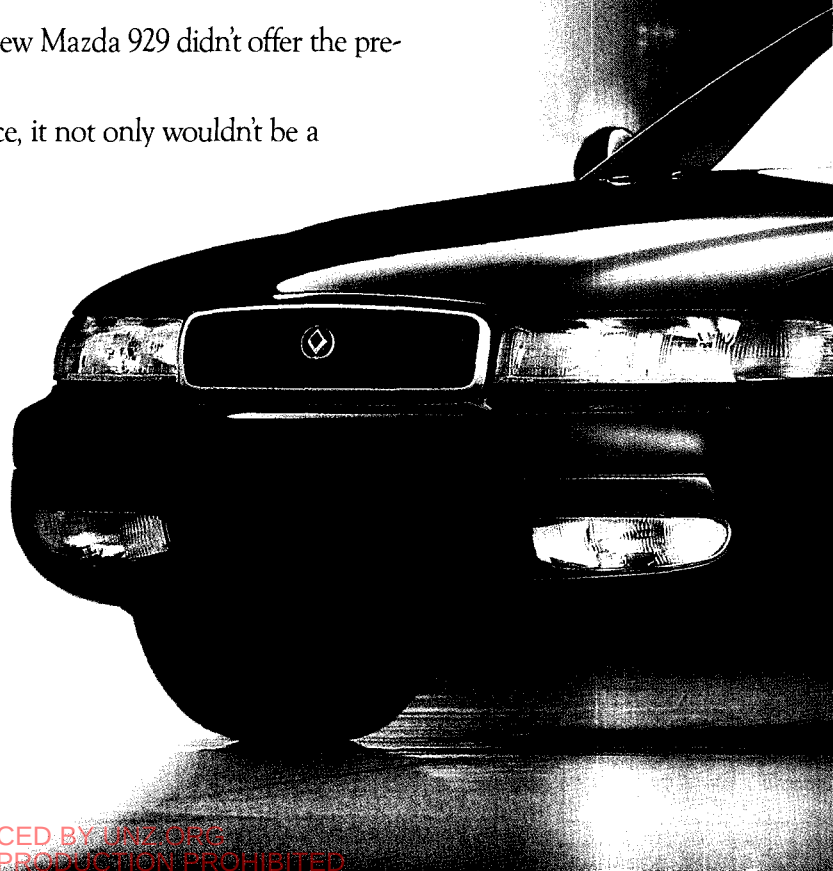
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cepted by terrorist sponsor states that our talk will be backed up by sanctions and action, it will quickly become clear that having it both ways with Washington is no longer an option.

FOR THE moment, any change in U.S. counterterrorism policy hangs on the outcome of a debate within the government. As the investment required to buy Syria's participation in the Middle East peace process increases, most officials in the State Department's Bureau for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs counsel a policy that amounts to business as usual. More important, as long as the peace process continues—regardless of results—both Secretary of State James Baker and the White House are likely to continue taking the same view. Some staff members of the National Security Council advocate a more active counterterrorism effort, but the Bush Administration has not followed up on a 1986 congressional recommendation to appoint an adviser for low-intensity conflict at the NSC, and it has not fully implemented a 1984 National Security Decision Directive that would bring a greater degree of coordination to the more than two dozen federal agencies somehow involved in the fight against terrorism. When the White House focuses on active counterterrorist measures at all, its eyes are on Libya, to the exclusion of less clumsy but no less active sponsor states.

Across the Potomac, at the Pentagon, counterterrorism planners in various departments, including the office of the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict (a relatively new position), are urging a tougher policy. In Congress support for such a policy waxes and wanes with the cycle of anti-American terrorist attacks, while a few key committee staff members work quietly to build a coalition that, when the right moment comes, could force a change.

Ultimately, the fight against terrorism is a human-rights issue; it derives from the view that no person, merely by virtue of citizenship, can legitimately be seen as a combatant in the wars of stateless criminal organizations. A willingness to take direct action against terrorists and the states that underwrite their violence could break the back of terrorism for a long time to come.

—Mark Edington



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In a land without a Koop, three teenagers out of five smoke cigarettes

FRANCE

An Ambivalent War Against Smoking

Even the French now worry about cigarettes, but attempts to curb smoking face some peculiarly Gallic obstacles

FRANCE, renowned among Americans as a bastion of Cartesian logic, is currently questioning itself over its curious, even paradoxical, posture regarding smoking. The United States has turned sharply against smoking, and readily accepts no-smoking zones in restaurants, offices, and public places. But in France things are different, because the French government owns the nation's cigarette-manufacturing monopoly. It reaps substantial tax revenues from cigarettes, and clings to its role as tobacco merchant. At the same time, the government pays the heavy health and social costs that derive from smoking. Each sale of a pack of Gauloises brings the state five francs in taxes and is estimated to cost the state around nine francs.

The contradiction became subject to increasingly intent scrutiny after publication of a proposed law to limit tobacco use, presented by twenty-seven members of the National Assembly, which said, "The state is pursuing a shortsighted policy, and cannot reconcile the tax revenue from tobacco with the health and social cost."

France's cigarette manufacturer and distributor, called SEITA (for Société d'Exploitation Industrielle des Tabacs et Allumettes), has the sole right to manufacture cigarettes within the country, and controls the distribution of almost all imported cigarettes. It belongs wholly to the government. SEITA generated 31 billion francs (\$5.48 billion) in 1990 tax revenues—some 2.3 percent of the national budget—plus an operating profit of \$66.7 million.

The annual cost to the country for health care related to smoking is estimated at \$8.8 billion, plus some \$2.6 billion in lost production, for a total social cost per year of \$11.4 billion.

Each year some 61,000 French men and women—almost the equivalent of the entire population of Cannes—die of ailments related to smoking. An authority on smoking in France, Professor Jean Marsac, the head of the pneumology department at Paris's Cochin Hospital, calls cigarettes "the most deadly addiction epidemic of the twentieth century." Cigarette consumption dou-

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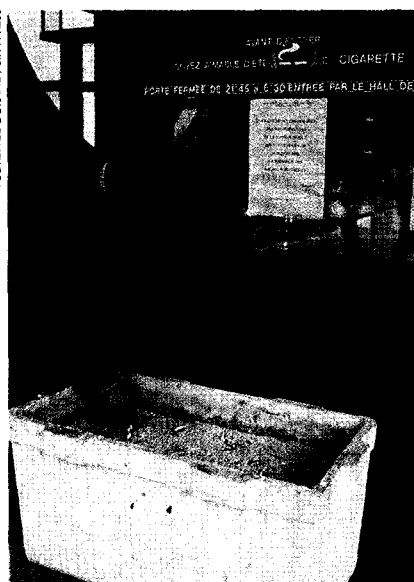
bled in France in the thirty-five years from 1950 to 1985, and although it has stopped increasing and has even declined slightly in recent years, heavy smokers are much more numerous today than they have been in the past: 23.5 percent of male smokers consumed more than a pack a day last year, as compared with 16 percent in 1977. Overall, 38 percent of people in France smoke, as compared with 29 percent in the United States, and smoke lies heavy almost everywhere in the land.

The nation's young people are hardest hit by the effects of smoking. They are the most suggestible, the most vulnerable to the seeming glamour of a once-forbidden adult habit. The earlier a person starts smoking, some specialists say, the more damaging the habit will be—and 10 percent of the smokers in France are under twelve. Sixty percent of all eighteen-year-olds are smokers.

Those French who smoke do so with avidity, and even light up between courses at meals, a practice once universally condemned. Watching students outside lycées or universities in France as they try to master the rituals of veteran smokers is amusing, although also depressing. Here one sees a latter-day Humphrey Bogart taking a deep pull on a Camel and throwing his head back dramatically to blow out the smoke; there a would-be John Wayne takes a hard-bitten draw on his Lucky Strike, eyes half closed with menace. The moment they emerge from class, students light up their Gitanes, Philip Morrises, and Gauloises, and they carry their cigarettes before them woodenly as though they were fetishes.

Valérie Nicolý, twenty-eight, an assistant television director who studied at the demanding Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris, explains the lure of smoking: "It has to do with the American image from World War Two, with the U.S. soldiers in Europe and their parachuted supplies of cigarettes, with the Far West, heroes, cowboys, films, adventure. All this makes smoking seem glamorous." She adds that André Malraux and other French intellectuals were usually seen as smokers, and many students aspire to become intellectuals. Students also spend a lot of time in cafés, she notes, establishments traditionally hazy with a mantle of blue-gray Gauloise smoke; this reinforces the habit.

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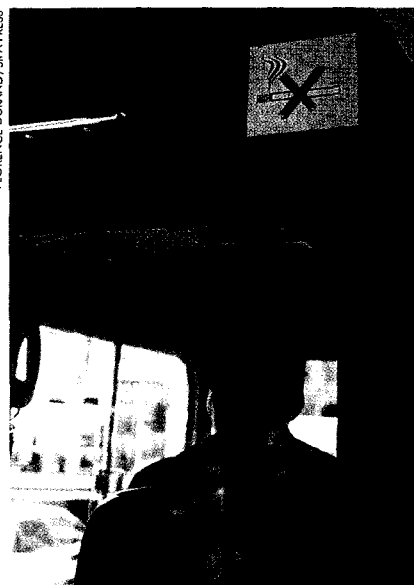


New regulations against smoking...

A more clinical view is taken by Guilhem Boutan, twenty-five, a graduate of the school of management at the University of Paris, Dauphine campus. "Stress leads people to smoke," he says, drawing deeply on a Marlboro, "and students are under a lot of stress. There is a lot of competition, a lot of pressure, in the French educational system." Boutan's view is confirmed by the weekly *Nouvel Observateur*, which conducted a study of smoking and concluded that "the major factor responsible for smoking seems to be 'le stress.'"

Of course, those who find relief from stress through cigarettes are feeling the effect of nicotine. Nicotine makes

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...have slowly been put into place

its way through the system quickly, reaching the brain in about seven seconds, and has what many smokers describe as a soothing effect. Nicotine, however, is also used as an insecticide, and a dose of as little as fifty milligrams will kill a human being within a few minutes.

Curiously enough, in view of its present reputation, tobacco was thought to be a panacea by those who introduced it in Europe. It came from the Americas, a precursor of other American imports, benign and malign, from democracy to jazz, fast food, the samba, and graffiti. Around 1560 Jean Nicot, France's ambassador to Portugal, sent some tobacco to Catherine de Médicis, the queen mother and regent of France, in hopes that the plant might help relieve her migraine headaches, and he won the debatable honor of having the psychoactive substance in tobacco named after him. Molière extolled the wonders of tobacco fulsomely in *Don Juan*, saying, "There is nothing like tobacco. . . . Not only does it rejuvenate and purge the human brain, but it instructs souls with virtue. . . ." James I of Scotland, more prescient, condemned it as "repugnant to the eye, detestable to the nose, dangerous for the brain, appalling for the lungs." In Russia, Czar Alexis Romanov ordered that smokers' noses be cut off.

The ambivalence of these views on tobacco is reflected in the French language, in which *tabac* can be used idiomatically to mean either a beating or a huge success. Whether tobacco was good or bad did not much matter to the French fiscal authorities, who in 1674, during the reign of Louis XIV, created a state monopoly controlling its sale. They sought to generate tax revenue, which the King knew all too well how to spend. The government's monopoly was briefly interrupted after the Revolution but was renewed under Napoléon, and has been preserved ever since.

Under today's regulations, cigarettes are sold only in designated stores, called *débits de tabac*, whose owners net six percent on every pack sold. The stores also sell stamps, candy, chewing gum, and other oddments, and many are operated in conjunction with newsstands or cafés. The rules help impose some limits on smoking among youths, because cigarettes are sold only over

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the counter, not from machines. Of course, underage smokers still find ways to obtain cigarettes.

FRANCE first moved to impose restrictions on smoking in the early 1970s, with limits on smoking in public places such as hospitals and schools. Then, in 1976, came the milestone "Loi Veil," which limited the advertising of tobacco products. The bill was named after Simone Veil, the Minister of Health at the time. Critics of France's efforts to curb smoking claim, however, that a Latin disinclination to enforce such laws has weakened their effect. Nonetheless, smoking has been prohibited on commuter trains and domestic French airline flights, and new rules protecting nonsmokers in workplaces and restaurants are due to come into effect this year.

Today France is suddenly conscious of both the effects of smoking and the effects of inhaling secondary smoke. Programs to help smokers stop abound; there are ad campaigns, seminars, smokeless days, no-smoking signs in cabs, and a variety of counseling services. A few employers offer salary bonuses to employees who don't smoke, but the practice is not widespread. An increasing amount of snarling occurs between smokers and nonsmokers.

The growing tension between the two camps burst into the open last year when SEITA launched a new brand of cigarettes under the name Chevignon, a maker of expensive jackets and other garb favored by the young moneyed set in Paris. Anti-smoking militants denounced the merchandising tactic as a lure to get young people to smoke, and demanded the withdrawal of the cigarettes from the market. The controversy actually shook the Cabinet. Ministers responsible for health vigorously disagreed with those responsible for the governance of SEITA as their duties put them on a collision course. Health won: the Chevignon brand was withdrawn after four months, and has not resurfaced.

Many people in France regard the new furor over smoking warily, having read horror stories about the anti-smoking hostilities in America, which are reported gleefully in French magazines and newspapers. The conflict in the United States is sometimes portrayed as a form of civil war. Journalists tell of fights, and write about smokers being

made to feel like outlaws, or being ostracized in business.

Some look beyond the quarrels to what they fear may eventually be a loss of liberty, a prospect few French will entertain gladly. A Paris paper, *Le Quotidien*, whose editor is probably a smoker, reported somberly on new anti-smoking rules imposed in New York and observed that "this revolution puts the fundamental liberty of every citizen in danger."

Indeed, the record so far shows that the controversy surrounding smoking can provide delicious opportunities for argument among a people known for their contentiousness. Anecdotes abound. A bus driver near Marseille was set upon by a woman professor, furious because he had an extinguished cigarette in his mouth. He applied for six weeks' leave from work to recuperate. Tobacco dealers in Besançon, angry at a vigorous new municipal campaign to reduce smoking, put up posters everywhere that said DON'T SMOKE! DON'T DRINK! DON'T MAKE LOVE! DON'T DRIVE YOUR CAR! YOU COULD DIE FROM IT! When the management of a Hewlett-Packard branch in France sought to impose smoking restrictions for health reasons, staff members threatened to barricade the company restaurant and keep fat people out, on the grounds that more food would be bad for their health.

Some other responses have been exaggerated too, like those of the anti-tobacco leader Jean Tostain, who denounces tobacco profits as "nico-dollars" and equates smokers with Nazis. Another militant, Bertrand Schmitt, confronts smokers in public places and hectors them priggishly. He even goes so far as to claim that smoking interferes with lovemaking. The moralizing of such activists, who are often reformed smokers themselves, is probably encouraging smokers to persist. Mort Rosenblum, an Associated Press correspondent who has covered France for years, calls them "health Fascists." To counter such tactics and unsettling allegations, efforts have begun to create a smokers'-rights movement, but with unimpressive results.

The potential for violent disagreement over the use of tobacco helps explain why the tobacco lobby in 1987 began a major \$530,000 advertising campaign emphasizing tolerance and courtesy between smokers and non-

smokers. The ads and posters showed engaging-looking people, presumably smokers, saying, "Let's ensure that life together remains a pleasure. Liberty works both ways."

This clever, low-key campaign generated a good deal of positive response, chiefly because it seemed nonpartisan but nevertheless upheld smokers' rights.

FRANCE HAS no bearded prophet like the redoubtable C. Everett Koop, the former U.S. Surgeon General, to lead an anti-smoking campaign and galvanize public opinion, but several vigorous private groups and forces in the government are striving to reduce the toll of smoking. Their aims, enunciated in reports and at public forums, include raising the price of cigarettes, reducing or eliminating cigarette advertising, putting bolder warnings on packages, creating more no-smoking areas, and lowering tar content.

They have made some discernible progress: cigarette prices were increased by five percent last September and will go up 10 percent more this year; advertising is being reduced by government order and will be eliminated by 1993; and SEITA is bringing the tar content of its cigarettes down to the 15-milligram level agreed on by the European Community for 1993. And a new, bolder legend now appears on the front of cigarette packages, announcing: *NUIT GRAVEMENT A LA SANTÉ* ("Seriously endangers health"). Other ominous messages are printed on the package backs, warning that smoking is harmful to others, is dangerous for unborn children, and causes cardiovascular diseases and cancer. The earlier, more modest warning said only *ABUS DANGEREUX*, and appeared in type approximately a sixteenth of an inch high.

But problems—of politics, price, and publicity—persist. "France is a somewhat peculiar country," says Dominique Lefebvre, an official in the Ministry of Culture and Communication. "You can't coerce people here." Speaking of the 1980s, he adds, "The political class did not show the political courage needed to make progress."

Raising cigarette prices, now the third lowest in Europe and half those in many other European countries, will reduce smoking, but it will also, from the politicians' point of view, adversely



affect France's cost-of-living index. Surprisingly, 1.8 percent of that index is made up of tobacco products. When the index goes up, salaries and wages escalate along with it, increasing inflation and generating political problems. Anti-smoking forces demand a cost-of-living index that omits tobacco, so that cigarette prices can be raised without causing index escalation.

The publicity problems arise because advertising agencies have become critical to political campaigns and political fund-raising. Lefebvre says pointedly that the agencies "open whole boulevards of influence." The prohibition on advertising for cigarettes may also lead to curbs on ads for alco-

holic drinks, and all this is highly hazardous to politicians' financial health.

Nevertheless, the government senses the changing climate and the desire for action. It is aware that 76 percent of French people believe that smoking shortens life. Accordingly, it plans to increase the pressure to reduce smoking. SEITA, which has already announced plans to reduce its work force by 245, is introducing cigarettes made with lighter tobacco and is expected to diversify, perhaps into food-related businesses. And a new cost-of-living index omitting tobacco may be adopted.

Such measures will be steps, but only steps, toward resolving the present-day policy contradiction in France,

which is described by Albert Hirsch, a leading researcher on smoking damage, as "a major paradox, an incoherence." In fairness, the paradox is grounded in history. It was logical in the seventeenth century to impose taxes on tobacco. It was logical in the twentieth century to provide a national health-care system. Some observers critical of the present arrangement recall the French Finance Minister of some years ago who was reminded that his treasury paid out three francs in health costs for every franc it took in from tobacco sales. He replied, "I get the one franc. It is my successor who will have to pay out the three francs."

—Judson Gooding

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THE WORDS THAT REMADE AMERICA

Lincoln at Gettysburg

BY GARRY WILLS

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG, both sides, leaving fifty thousand dead or wounded or missing behind them, had reason to maintain a large pattern of pretense—Lee pretending that he was not taking back to the South a broken cause, Meade that he would not let the broken pieces fall through his fingers. It would have been hard to predict that Gettysburg, out of all this muddle, these missed chances, all the senseless deaths, would become a symbol of national purpose, pride, and ideals. Abraham Lincoln transformed the ugly reality into something rich and strange—and he did it with 272 words. The power of words has rarely been given a more compelling demonstration.

The residents of Gettysburg had little reason to be satisfied with the war machine that had churned up their lives. General George Gordon Meade may have pursued General Robert E. Lee in slow motion, but he wired headquarters that "I cannot delay to pick up the debris of the battlefield." That debris was mainly a matter of rotting horseflesh and manflesh—thousands of fermenting bodies, with gas-distended bellies, deliquescing in the July heat. For hygienic reasons, the five thousand horses and mules had to be consumed by fire, trading the smell of decaying flesh for that of burning flesh. Human bodies were scattered over, or (barely) under, the ground. Suffocating teams of Union soldiers, Confederate prisoners, and dragooned civilians slid the bodies beneath a minimal covering as fast as possible—crudely posting the names of the Union dead with sketchy information on boards, not stopping to figure out what units the Confederate bodies had belonged to. It was work to be done hugger-mugger or not at all, fighting clustered bluebottle flies black on the earth, shoveling and retching by turns.

The whole area of Gettysburg—a town of only twenty-five hundred inhabitants—was one makeshift burial ground, fetid and steaming. Andrew Curtin, the Republican governor of Pennsylvania, was facing a difficult reelection campaign. He must placate local feeling, deal

with other states diplomatically, and raise the funds to cope with corpses that could go on killing by means of fouled streams or contaminating exhumations.

Curtin made the thirty-two-year-old David Wills, a Gettysburg lawyer, his agent on the scene. Wills (who is no relation to the author) had studied law with Gettysburg's most prominent former citizen, Thaddeus Stevens, the radical Republican now representing Lancaster in Congress. Wills was a civic leader, and he owned the largest house on the town square. He put an end to land speculation for the burial ground and formed an interstate commission to collect funds for the cleansing of Gettysburg's bloodied fields. The states were to be assessed according to their representation in Congress. To charge them by the actual number of each state's dead would have been a time-consuming and complicated process, waiting on identification of each corpse, on the division of costs for those who could not be identified, and on the fixing of per-body rates for exhumation, identification, and reinterment.

Wills put up for bids the contract to rebury the bodies; out of thirty-four bids, the high one was eight dollars per corpse and the winning one was \$1.59. The federal government was asked to ship in the thousands of caskets needed, courtesy of the War Department. All other costs were handled by the interstate commission. Wills took title to seventeen acres for the new cemetery in the name of Pennsylvania.

Wills meant to dedicate the ground that would hold the corpses even before they were moved. He felt the need for artful words to sweeten the poisoned air of Gettysburg. He asked the principal wordsmiths of his time to join this effort—Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant. All three poets, each for his own reason, found their muse unbiddable. But Wills was not terribly disappointed. The normal purgative for such occasions was a large-scale, solemn act of oratory, a kind of performance art that had great power over audiences in the middle of the nine-

teenth century. Some later accounts would emphasize the length of the main speech at the Gettysburg dedication, as if that were an ordeal or an imposition on the audience. But a talk of several hours was customary and expected then—much like the length and pacing of a modern rock concert. The crowds that heard Lincoln debate Stephen Douglas in 1858, through three-hour engagements, were delighted to hear Daniel Webster and other orators of the day recite carefully composed paragraphs for two hours at the least.

The champion at such declamatory occasions, after the death of Daniel Webster, was Webster's friend Edward Everett. Everett was that rare thing, a scholar and an Ivy League diplomat who could hold mass audiences in thrall. His voice, diction, and gestures were successfully dramatic, and he habitually performed his well-crafted text, no matter how long, from memory. Everett was the inevitable choice for Wills, the indispensable component in the scheme for the cemetery's consecration. Battlefields were something of a specialty with Everett—he had augmented the fame of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill by his oratory at those Revolutionary sites. Simply to have him speak at Gettysburg would add this field to the sacred roll of names from the Founders' battles.

Everett was invited, on September 23, to appear October 23. That would leave all of November for filling the graves. But a month was not sufficient time for Everett to make his customary preparation for a major speech. He did careful research on the battles he was commemorating—a task made difficult in this case by the fact that official accounts of the engagement were just appearing. Everett would have to make his own inquiries. He could not be ready before November 19. Wills seized on that earliest moment, though it broke with the reburial schedule that had been laid out to follow on the October dedication. He decided to move up the reburial, beginning it in October and hoping to finish by November 19.

The careful negotiations with Everett form a contrast, more surprising to us than to contemporaries, with the casual invitation to President Lincoln, issued some time later as part of a general call for the federal Cabinet and other celebrities to join in what was essentially a ceremony of the participating states.

No insult was intended. Federal responsibility for or participation in state activities was not assumed then. And Lincoln took no offense. Though specifically invited to deliver only "a few appropriate remarks" to open the cemetery, he meant to use this opportunity. The partly mythical victory of Gettysburg was an element of his Administration's war propaganda. (There were, even then, few enough victories to boast of.) Beyond that, he was working to unite the rival Republican factions of Governor Curtin and Simon Cameron, Edwin Stanton's predecessor as Secretary of War. He knew that most of the state governors would be attending or sending important aides—his own bodyguard, Ward Lamon, who was acting as

chief marshal organizing the affair, would have alerted him to the scale the event had assumed, with a tremendous crowd expected. This was a classic situation for political fence-mending and intelligence-gathering. Lincoln would take with him aides who would circulate and bring back their findings. Lamon himself had a cluster of friends in Pennsylvania politics, including some close to Curtin, who had been infuriated when Lincoln overrode his opposition to Cameron's Cabinet appointment.

Lincoln also knew the power of his rhetoric to define war aims. He was seeking occasions to use his words outside the normal round of proclamations and reports to Congress. His determination not only to be present but to speak is seen in the way he overrode staff scheduling for the trip to Gettysburg. Stanton had arranged for a 6:00 A.M. train to take him the hundred and twenty rail miles to the noontime affair. But Lincoln was familiar enough by now with military movement to appreciate what Clausewitz called "friction" in the disposal of forces—the margin for error that must always be built into planning. Lamon would have informed Lincoln about the potential for muddle on the nineteenth. State delegations, civic organizations, military bands and units, were planning to come by train and road, bringing at least ten thousand people to a town with poor resources for feeding and sheltering crowds (especially if the weather turned bad). So Lincoln countermanded Stanton's plan:

I do not like this arrangement. I do not wish to so go that by the slightest accident we fail entirely, and, at the best, the whole to be a mere breathless running of the gauntlet. . . .

If Lincoln had not changed the schedule, he would very likely not have given his talk. Even on the day before, his trip to Gettysburg took six hours, with transfers in Baltimore and at Hanover Junction. Governor Curtin, starting from Harrisburg (thirty miles away) with six other governors as his guests, was embarrassed by breakdowns and delays that made them miss dinner at David Wills's house. They had gathered at 2:00 P.M., started at five, and arrived at eleven. Senator Alexander Ramsey, of Minnesota, was stranded, at 4:00 A.M. on the day of delivery, in Hanover Junction, with "no means of getting up to Gettysburg." Lincoln kept his resolution to leave a day early even when he realized that his wife was hysterical over one son's illness soon after the death of another son. The President had important business in Gettysburg.

When Lightning Struck

FOR A MAN SO DETERMINED TO GET THERE, LINCOLN seems—in familiar accounts—to have been rather cavalier about preparing what he would say in Gettysburg. The silly but persistent myth is that he jotted his brief remarks on the back of an envelope. (Many details of the day are in fact still disputed,



IMPORTANT BUSINESS IN GETTYSBURG

and no definitive account exists.) Better-attested reports have him considering them on the way to a photographer's shop in Washington, writing them on a piece of cardboard as the train took him on the hundred-and-twenty-mile trip, penciling them in David Wills's house on the night before the dedication, writing them in that house on the morning of the day he had to deliver them, and even composing them in his head as Everett spoke, before Lincoln rose to follow him.

These recollections, recorded at various times after the

speech had been given and won fame, reflect two concerns on the part of those speaking them. They reveal an understandable pride in participation at the historic occasion. It was not enough for those who treasured their day at Gettysburg to have heard Lincoln speak—a privilege they shared with ten to twenty thousand other people, and an experience that lasted no more than three minutes. They wanted to be intimate with the gestation of that extraordinary speech, watching the pen or pencil move under the inspiration of the moment.

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*Lincoln knew the power of his rhetoric to define war aims.
His determination not only to be present but to speak is seen
in the way he overrode staff scheduling for the trip.*

That is the other emphasis in these accounts—that it *was* a product of the moment, struck off as Lincoln moved under destiny's guidance. Inspiration was shed on him in the presence of others. The contrast with Everett's long labors of preparation is always implied. Research, learning, the student's lamp—none of these were needed by Lincoln, whose unsummoned muse was prompting him, a democratic muse unacquainted with the library. Lightning struck, and each of our informants (or their sources) was there when it struck.

The trouble with these accounts is that the lightning strikes too often, as if it could not get the work done on its first attempt. It hits Lincoln on the train, in his room, at night, in the morning. If inspiration was treating him this way, he should have been short-circuited, not inspired, by the time he spoke.

These mythical accounts are badly out of character for Lincoln, who composed his speeches thoughtfully. His law partner, William Herndon, having observed Lincoln's careful preparation of cases, recorded that he was a slow writer, who liked to sort out his points and tighten his logic and his phrasing. That is the process vouched for in every other case of Lincoln's memorable public statements. It is impossible to imagine him leaving his Gettysburg speech to the last moment. He knew he would be busy on the train and at the site—important political guests were with him from his departure, and more joined him at Baltimore, full of talk about the war, elections, and policy. In Gettysburg he would be entertained at David Wills's house, with Everett and other important guests. State delegations would want a word with him. He hoped for a quick tour of the battle site (a hope fulfilled early on the nineteenth). He could not count on any time for the concentration he required when weighing his words.

In fact, at least two people testified that the speech was mainly composed in Washington, before Lincoln left for Gettysburg—though these reports, like all later ones describing this speech's composition, are themselves suspect. Lamon claimed that a day or two before the dedication Lincoln read him substantially the text that was delivered. But Lamon's remarks are notoriously imaginative, and he was busy in Gettysburg from November 13 to 16. He made a swift trip back to Washington on the sixteenth to collect his marshals and instruct them before departing again the next morning. His testimony here, as elsewhere, does not have much weight.

Noah Brooks, Lincoln's journalist friend, claimed that he talked with Lincoln on November 15, when Lincoln told him he had written his speech "over, two or three times"—but Brooks also said that Lincoln had with him galleys of Everett's speech, which had been set in type for later printing by the *Boston Journal*. In fact the Everett speech was not set until November 14, and then by the *Boston Daily Advertiser*. It is unlikely that a copy could have reached Lincoln so early.

"Remarks"

LINCOLN'S TRAIN ARRIVED TOWARD DUSK IN GETTYSBURG. There were still coffins stacked at the station for completing the reburials. Lamon, Wills, and Everett met Lincoln and escorted him the two blocks to the Wills home, where dinner was waiting, along with almost two dozen other distinguished guests. Lincoln's black servant, William Slade, took his luggage to the second-story room where he would stay that night, which looked out on the square.

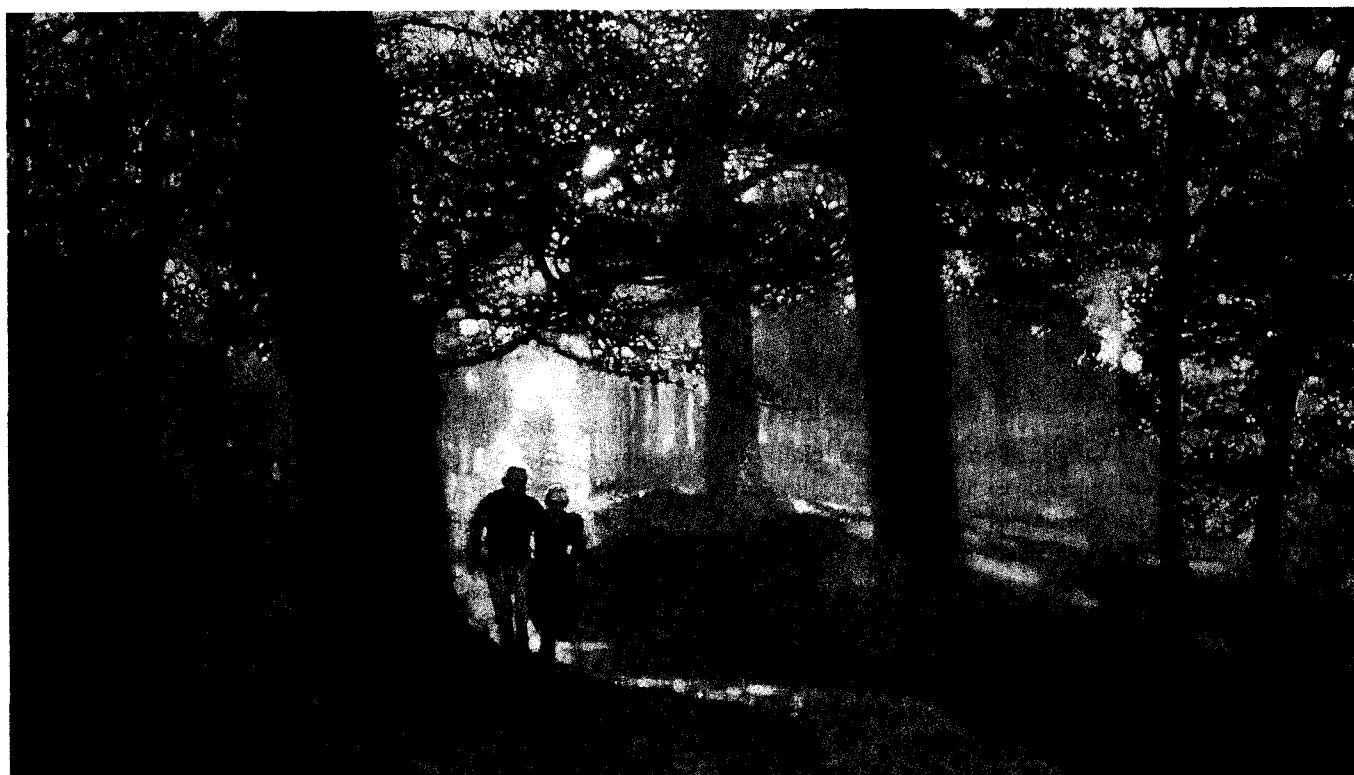
Everett was already in residence at the Wills house, and Governor Curtin's late arrival led Wills to suggest that the two men share a bed. The governor thought he could find another house to receive him, though lodgings were so overcrowded that Everett said in his diary that "the fear of having the Executive of Pennsylvania tumbled in upon me kept me awake until one." Everett's daughter was sleeping with two other women, and the bed broke under their weight. William Saunders, the cemetery's designer, who would have an honored place on the platform the next day, could find no bed and had to sleep sitting up in a crowded parlor.

It is likely that Everett, who had the galleys of his speech with him, showed them to Lincoln that night. Noah Brooks, who mistook the *time* when Everett showed Lincoln his speech, probably gave the right *reason*—so that Lincoln would not be embarrassed by any inadvertent correspondences or unintended differences.

Lincoln greeted Curtin after his late arrival, and was otherwise interrupted during the night. Bands and serenades were going through the crowded square under his window. One group asked him to speak, and the newspaper reported his words:

I appear before you, fellow-citizens, merely to thank you for this compliment. The inference is a very fair

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one that you would hear me for a little while at least, were I to commence to make a speech. I do not appear before you for the purpose of doing so, and for several substantial reasons. The most substantial of these is that I have no speech to make. [Laughter.] In my position it is somewhat important that I should not say any foolish things. [A voice: If you can help it.] It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all. [Laughter.] Believing that is my present condition this evening, I must beg of you to excuse me from addressing you further.

This displays Lincoln's normal reluctance to improvise words as President. Lincoln's secretary John Hay, watching the scene from the crowd, noted in his diary: "The President appeared at the door and said half a dozen words meaning nothing & went in."

Early in the morning Lincoln took a carriage ride to the battle sites. Later, Ward Lamon and his specially uniformed marshals assigned horses to the various dignitaries (carriages would have clogged the site too much). Although the march was less than a mile, Lamon had brought thirty horses into town, and Wills had supplied a hundred, to honor the officials present.

Lincoln sat his horse gracefully (to the surprise of some), and looked meditative during the long wait while marshals tried to coax into line important people more concerned about their dignity than the President was about his. Lincoln was wearing a mourning band on his hat for his dead son. He also wore white gauntlets, which made his large hands on the reins dramatic by contrast with his otherwise black attire.

Everett had gone out earlier, by carriage, to prepare himself in the special tent he had asked for near the platform. At sixty-nine, he had kidney trouble and needed to relieve himself just before and after the three-hour ceremony. (He had put his problem so delicately that his hosts did not realize that he meant to be left alone in the tent; but he finally coaxed them out.) Everett mounted the platform at the last moment, after most of the others had arrived.

Those on the raised platform were hemmed in close by standing crowds. When it had become clear that the numbers might approach twenty thousand, the platform had been set at some distance from the burial operations. Only a third of the expected bodies had been buried, and those under fresh mounds. Other graves had been readied for the bodies, which arrived in irregular order (some from this state, some from that), making it impossible to complete one section at a time. The whole burial site was incomplete. Marshals tried to keep the milling thousands out of the work in progress.

Everett, as usual, had neatly placed his thick text on a little table before him—and then ostentatiously refused to look at it. He was able to indicate with gestures the sites of the battle's progress, visible from where he stood. He excoriated the rebels for their atrocities, implicitly

justifying the fact that some Confederate skeletons were still unburied, lying in the clefts of Devil's Den under rocks and autumn leaves. Two days earlier Everett had been shown around the field, and places were pointed out where the bodies lay. His speech, for good or ill, would pick its way through the carnage.

As a former Secretary of State, Everett had many sources, in and outside government, for the information he had gathered so diligently. Lincoln no doubt watched closely how the audience responded to passages that absolved Meade of blame for letting Lee escape. The setting of the battle in a larger logic of campaigns had an immediacy for those on the scene which we cannot recover. Everett's familiarity with the details was flattering to the local audience, which nonetheless had things to learn from this shapely presentation of the whole three days' action. This was like a modern "docudrama" on television, telling the story of recent events on the basis of investigative reporting. We badly misread the evidence if we think Everett failed to work his customary magic. The best witnesses on the scene—Lincoln's personal secretaries, John Hay and John Nicolay, with their professional interest in good prose and good theater—praised Everett at the time and ever after. He received more attention in their biography's chapter on Gettysburg than did their own boss.

When Lincoln rose, it was with a sheet or two, from which he read. Lincoln's three minutes would ever after be obsessively contrasted with Everett's two hours in accounts of this day. It is even claimed that Lincoln disconcerted the crowd with his abrupt performance, so that people did not know how to respond ("Was that *all*?"). Myth tells of a poor photographer making leisurely arrangements to take Lincoln's picture, expecting him to be standing for some time. But it is useful to look at the relevant part of the program:

Music. *by Birgfield's Band.*

Prayer. *by Rev. T.H. Stockton, D.D.*

Music. *by the Marine Band.*

ORATION. *by Hon. Edward Everett.*

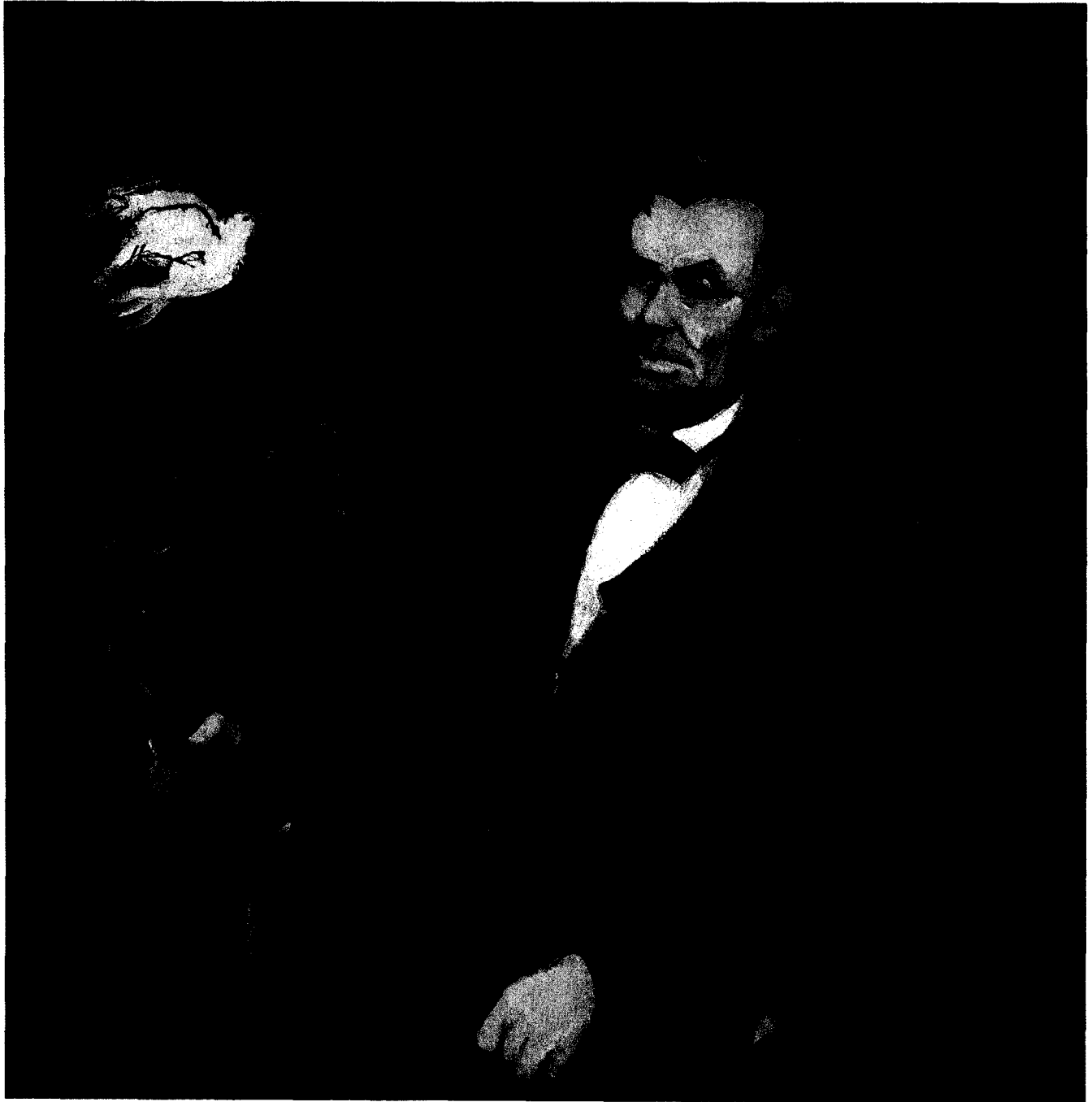
Music. *Hymn composed by B. B. French.*

DEDICATORY REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

Dirge. *sung by Choir selected for the occasion.*

Benediction. *by Rev. H.L. Baugher, D.D.*

There was only one "oration" announced or desired here. Though we call Lincoln's text *the* Gettysburg Address, that title clearly belongs to Everett. Lincoln's contribution, labeled "remarks," was intended to make the dedication formal (somewhat like ribbon-cutting at modern openings). Lincoln was not expected to speak at length, any more than Rev. T. H. Stockton was (though Stockton's prayer *is* four times the length of the President's remarks). A contrast of length with Everett's talk raises a false issue. Lincoln's text *is* startlingly brief for what it ac-



A DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE PERFORMANCE

complished, but that would be equally true if Everett had spoken for a shorter time or had not spoken at all.

Nonetheless, the contrast was strong. Everett's voice was sweet and expertly modulated; Lincoln's was high to the point of shrillness, and his Kentucky accent offended some eastern sensibilities. But Lincoln derived an advantage from his high tenor voice—carrying power. If there is agreement on any one aspect of Lincoln's delivery, at Gettysburg or elsewhere, it is on his audibility. Modern impersonators of Lincoln, such as Walter Huston, Ray-

mond Massey, Henry Fonda, and the various actors who give voice to Disneyland animations of the President, bring him before us as a baritone, which is considered a more manly or heroic voice—though both the Roosevelt Presidents of our century were tenors. What should not be forgotten is that Lincoln was himself an actor, an expert raconteur and mimic, and one who spent hours reading speeches out of Shakespeare to any willing (or sometimes unwilling) audience. He knew a good deal about rhythmic delivery and meaningful inflection. John Hay,

Can we arrest t robs people of



the disease that steals their minds?



Over 4 million people suffer from it, and nearly half of all nursing home patients are its victims.

It's Alzheimer's, the disease that steals a person's mind, dignity and independence, and exacts costs of over \$88 billion a year for institutional and home care.

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This exhaustive, high risk research increases the industry's cost of doing business, and in turn the price of drugs. But it also leads to the kind of discoveries that can break the grip of an enormously costly disease like Alzheimer's.

To learn more about pharmaceutical research, and the critical role it plays in health care, call or write for our free booklet, "Good Medicine."

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who had submitted to many of those Shakespeare readings, gave high marks to his boss's performance at Gettysburg. He put in his diary at the time that "the President, in a fine, free way, with more grace than is his wont, said his half dozen words of consecration." Lincoln's text was polished, his delivery emphatic; he was interrupted by applause five times. Read in a slow, clear way to the farthest listeners, the speech would take about three minutes. It is quite true the audience did not take in all that happened in that short time—we are still trying to weigh the consequences of Lincoln's amazing performance. But the myth that Lincoln was disappointed in the result—that he told the unreliable Lamon that his speech, like a bad plow, "won't scour"—has no basis. He had done what he wanted to do, and Hay shared the pride his superior took in an important occasion put to good use.

A Giant, if Benign, Swindle

AT THE LEAST, LINCOLN HAD FAR SURPASSED David Wills's hope for words to disinfect the air of Gettysburg. His speech hovers far above the carnage. He lifts the battle to a level of abstraction that purges it of grosser matter—even "earth" is mentioned only as the thing from which the tested form of government shall not perish. The nightmare realities have been etherealized in the crucible of his language.

Lincoln was here to clear the infected atmosphere of American history itself, tainted with official sins and inherited guilt. He would cleanse the Constitution—not as William Lloyd Garrison had, by burning an instrument that countenanced slavery. He altered the document from within, by appeal from its letter to the spirit, subtly changing the recalcitrant stuff of that legal compromise, bringing it to its own indictment. By implicitly doing this, he performed one of the most daring acts of open-air sleight of hand ever witnessed by the unsuspecting. Everyone in that vast throng of thousands was having his or her intellectual pocket picked. The crowd departed with a new thing in its ideological luggage, the new Constitution Lincoln had substituted for the one they had brought there with them. They walked off from those curving graves on the hillside, under a changed sky, into a different America. Lincoln had revolutionized the Revolution, giving people a new past to live with that would change their future indefinitely.

Some people, looking on from a distance, saw that a giant (if benign) swindle had been performed. The *Chicago Times* quoted the letter of the Constitution to Lincoln—noting its lack of reference to equality, its tolerance of slavery—and said that Lincoln was betraying the instrument he was on oath to defend, traducing the men who died for the letter of that fundamental law:

It was to uphold this constitution, and the Union created by it, that our officers and soldiers gave their lives at Gettysburg. How dared he, then, standing on their

graves, misstate the cause for which they died, and libel the statesmen who founded the government? They were men possessing too much self-respect to declare that negroes were their equals, or were entitled to equal privileges.

Heirs to this outrage still attack Lincoln for subverting the Constitution at Gettysburg—suicidally frank conservatives like M. E. Bradford and the late Willmoore Kendall. But most conservatives are understandably unwilling to challenge a statement now so hallowed, so literally sacrosanct, as Lincoln's clever assault on the constitutional past. They would rather hope or pretend, with some literary critics, that Lincoln's emotionally moving address had no discernible intellectual content, that, in the words of the literary critic James Hurt, "the sequence of ideas is commonplace to the point of banality, the ordinary coin of funereal oratory."

People like Kendall and the *Chicago Times* editors might have wished this were true, but they knew better. They recognized the audacity of Lincoln's undertaking. Kendall rightly says that Lincoln undertook a new founding of the nation, to correct things felt to be imperfect in the Founders' own achievement:

Abraham Lincoln and, in considerable degree, the authors of the post-civil-war amendments, attempted a new act of founding, involving concretely a startling new interpretation of that principle of the founders which declares that "All men are created equal."

Edwin Meese and other "original intent" conservatives also want to go back before the Civil War amendments (particularly the Fourteenth) to the original Founders. Their job would be comparatively easy if they did not have to work against the values created by the Gettysburg Address. Its deceptively simple-sounding phrases appeal to Americans in ways that Lincoln had perfected in his debates over the Constitution during the 1850s. During that time Lincoln found the language, the imagery, the myths, that are given their best and briefest embodiment at Gettysburg. In order to penetrate the mystery of his "refounding," we must study all the elements of that stunning verbal coup. Without Lincoln's knowing it himself, all his prior literary, intellectual, and political labors had prepared him for the intellectual revolution contained in those 272 words.

Texts With a Sting

LINCOLN'S SPEECH IS BRIEF, ONE MIGHT ARGUE, because it is silent on so much that one would expect to hear about. The Gettysburg Address does not mention Gettysburg. Or slavery. Or—more surprising—the Union. (Certainly not the South.) The other major message of 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation, is not mentioned, much less defended or vindicated. The "great task" mentioned in the address is

Lincoln was here to clear the infected atmosphere of American history itself, tainted with official sins and inherited guilt. He would cleanse the Constitution.

not emancipation but the preservation of self-government. We assume today that self-government includes self-rule by blacks as well as whites; but at the time of his appearance at Gettysburg, Lincoln was not advocating even eventual suffrage for African-Americans. The Gettysburg Address, for all its artistry and eloquence, does not directly address the prickliest issues of its historical moment.

Lincoln was accused during his lifetime of clever evasions and key silences. He was especially indirect and hard to interpret on the subject of slavery. That puzzled his contemporaries, and has infuriated some later students of his attitude. Theodore Parker, the Boston preacher who was the idol of Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, found Lincoln more clever than principled in his 1858 Senate race, when he debated Stephen Douglas. Parker initially supported William Seward for President in 1860, because he found Seward more forthright than Lincoln in his opposition to slavery. But Seward probably lost the Republican nomination *because* of that forthrightness. Lincoln was more cautious and circuitous. The reasons for his reserve before his nomination are clear enough—though that still leaves the omissions of the Gettysburg Address to be explained.

Lincoln's political base, the state of Illinois, runs down to a point (Cairo) farther south than all of what became West Virginia, and farther south than most of Kentucky and Virginia. The "Negrophobia" of Illinois led it to vote overwhelmingly in 1848, just ten years before the Lincoln-Douglas debates, to amend the state constitution so as to deny freed blacks all right of entry to the state. The average vote of the state was 79 percent for exclusion, though southern and some central counties were probably more than 90 percent for it. Lincoln knew the racial geography of his own state well, and calibrated what he had to say about slavery according to his audience.

Lincoln knew it was useless to promote the abolitionist position in Illinois. He wanted to establish some common ground to hold together the elements of his fledgling Republican Party. Even as a lawyer, Herndon said, he concentrated so fiercely on the main point to be established ("the nub") that he would concede almost any ancillary matter. Lincoln's accommodation to the prejudice of his time did not imply any agreement with the points he found it useless to dispute. One sees his attitude in the disarming concession he made to Horace Greeley, in order to get to the nub of their disagreement:

I have just read yours of the 19th addressed to myself through the New-York Tribune. If there be in it any statements, or assumptions of fact, which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend, whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

Obviously, Lincoln did not agree with the aspersions that Greeley had cast, but this was not a matter he could usefully pursue "now and here." In the same way, Lincoln preferred agnosticism about blacks' intellectual inferiority to whites, and went along with the desire to keep them socially inferior. As George Fredrickson points out, agnosticism rather than *certainly* about blacks' intellectual disability was the liberal position of that time, and there was nothing Lincoln or anyone else could do about social mixing. Lincoln refused to let the matter of political equality get tangled up with such emotional and (for the time) unresolvable issues. What, for him, was the nub, the realizable minimum—which would be hard enough to establish in the first place?

At the very least, it was wrong to treat human beings as property. Lincoln reduced the slaveholders' position to absurdity by spelling out its consequences:

If it is a sacred right for the people of Nebraska to take and hold slaves there, it is equally their sacred right to buy them where they can buy them cheapest; and that undoubtedly will be on the coast of Africa . . . [where a slavetrader] buys them at the rate of about a red cotton handkerchief a head. This is very cheap.

Why do people not take advantage of this bargain? Because they will be hanged like pirates if they try. Yet if slaves are just one form of property like any other,

it is a great abridgement of the sacred right of self-government to hang men for engaging in this profitable trade!

Not only had the federal government, following international sentiment, outlawed the slave trade, but the domestic slave barterer was held in low esteem, even in the South:

You do not recognize him as a friend, or even as an honest man. Your children must not play with his. . . . Now why is this? You do not so treat the man who deals in corn, cattle or tobacco.

Lincoln altered the Constitution from within, by appeal from its letter to the spirit, subtly changing the recalcitrant stuff of that compromise, bringing it to its own indictment.

And what kind of *property* is “set free”? People do not “free” houses or their manufactures to fend for themselves. But there were almost half a million freed blacks in Lincoln’s America:

How comes this vast amount of property to be running about without owners? We do not see free horses or free cattle running at large.

Lincoln said that in 1854, three years before Chief Justice Roger Taney declared, in the Dred Scott case, that slaves were movable property like any other chattel goods. The absurd had become law. No wonder Lincoln felt he had to fight for even minimal recognition of human rights.

If the black man owns himself and is not another person’s property, then he has rights in the product of his labor:

I agree with Judge Douglas [the Negro] is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, *he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.*

Lincoln, as often, was using a Bible text, and one with a sting in it. The *curse* of mankind in general, that “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19), is, at the least, a *right* for blacks.

Lincoln tried to use one prejudice against another. There was in Americans a prejudgment in favor of anything biblical. There was also antimonarchical bias. Lincoln put the text about eating the bread of one’s own sweat in an American context of antimonarchism.

That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, “You work and toil and earn bread, and I’ll eat it.” [Loud applause.] No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

In at least these two ways, then, slavery is wrong. One cannot own human beings, and one should not be in the position of a king over human beings.

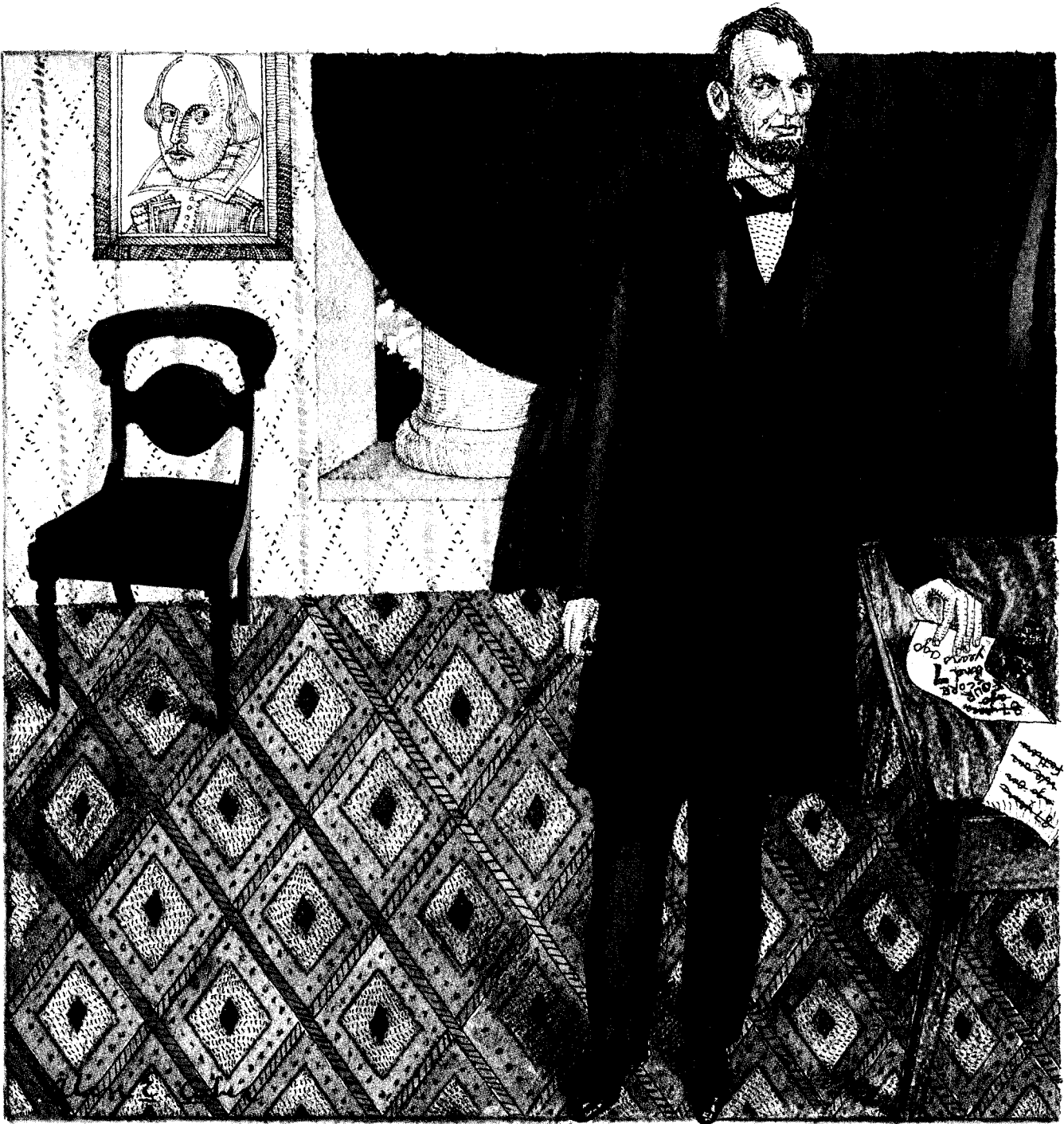
Lincoln knew how to sneak around the frontal defenses of prejudice and find a back way into agreement with bigots. This explains, at the level of tactics, the usefulness to Lincoln of the Declaration of Independence. That revered document was antimonarchical in the common perception, and on that score unchallengeable. But because it indicted King George III in terms of the equality of men, the Declaration committed Americans to claims even more at odds with slavery than with kingship—since kings do not necessarily claim to own their subjects. Put the claims of the Declaration as mildly as possible, and they still cannot be reconciled with slavery:

I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the [politically and socially] superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. [Loud cheers.] I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man.

Plain Speech

LINCOLN’S SPEECH AT GETTYSBURG WORKED SEVERAL revolutions, beginning with one in literary style. Everett’s talk was given at the last point in history when such a performance could be appreciated without reservation. It was made obsolete within a half hour of the time when it was spoken. Lincoln’s remarks anticipated the shift to vernacular rhythms which Mark Twain would complete twenty years later. Hemingway claimed that all modern American novels are the offspring of *Huckleberry Finn*. It is no greater exaggeration to say that all modern political prose descends from the Gettysburg Address.

The address looks less mysterious than it should to those who believe there is such a thing as “natural speech.” All speech is unnatural. It is artificial. Believers in “artless” or “plain” speech think that rhetoric is added to some prior natural thing, like cosmetics added to the unadorned face. But human faces are born, like kitten faces. Words are not born in that way. Human babies, unlike kittens, later produce an artifact called language, and they largely speak in jingles, symbols, tales, and myths



A REVOLUTION IN LITERARY STYLE

during the early stages of their talk. Plain speech is a later development, in whole cultures as in individuals. Simple prose depends on a complex epistemology—it depends on concepts like “objective fact.” Language reverses the logic of horticulture: here the blossoms come first, and *they* produce the branches.

Lincoln, like most writers of great prose, began by writing bad poetry. Early experiments with words are almost always stilted, formal, tentative. Economy of words, grip, precision, come later (if at all). A Gettysburg Address

does not precede rhetoric but burns its way through the lesser toward the greater eloquence, by long discipline. Lincoln not only exemplifies this process but studied it, in himself and others. He was a student of the word.

Lincoln’s early experiments with language have an exuberance that is almost comic in its playing with contrivances. His showy 1838 speech to the Young Men’s Lyceum is now usually studied to support or refute Edmund Wilson’s claim that it contains oedipal feelings. But its most obvious feature is the attempt to describe a com-

plex situation in neatly balanced structures (emphasized here by division into rhetorical units).

*Their's was the task
(and nobly they performed it)
to possess themselves,
and through themselves, us,
of this goodly land;
and to uprear upon its hills
and its valleys,
a political edifice of liberty
and equal rights;
'tis ours only,
to transmit these,
the former, unprofaned by the foot of an
invader;
the latter, undecayed by the lapse of time,
and untorn by usurpation—
to the latest generation that fate shall permit
the world to know.*

This is too labored to be clear. One has to look a second time to be sure that “the former” refers to “this goodly land” and “the latter” to “a political edifice.” But the exercise is limbering Lincoln up for subtler uses of such balance and antithesis. The parenthetical enriching of a first phrase is something he would use in his later prose to give it depth (I have added all but the first set of parentheses):

*Their's was the task
(and nobly they performed it)
to possess themselves
(and through themselves, us)
of this goodly land*

It is the pattern of

*The world will little note
(nor long remember)
what we say here*

And, from the Second Inaugural Address, of

*Fondly do we hope
(fervently do we pray)
that this mighty scourge of war
may speedily pass away*

And, also from the Second Inaugural,

*... with firmness in the right
(as God gives us to see the right)
let us strive on to finish
the work we are in*

To end after complex melodic pairings with a strong row of monosyllables was an effect he especially liked. Not only “the world to know” and “what we say here” and “the work we are in” in the examples above but also, from the 1861 Farewell Address at Springfield, Illinois, in

*Trusting in Him,
who can go with me,*

*and remain with you
and be every where for good,
let us confidently hope
that all will yet be well.*

And in this, from the Second Inaugural,

*Both parties deprecated war;
but one of them would make war
rather than let the nation survive;
and the other would accept war
rather than let it perish.
And the war came.*

And, in the 1862 message to Congress,

*In giving freedom to the slave,
we assure freedom to the free—
honorable alike in what we give,
and what we preserve.
We shall nobly save,
or meanly lose,
the last best, hope of earth.*

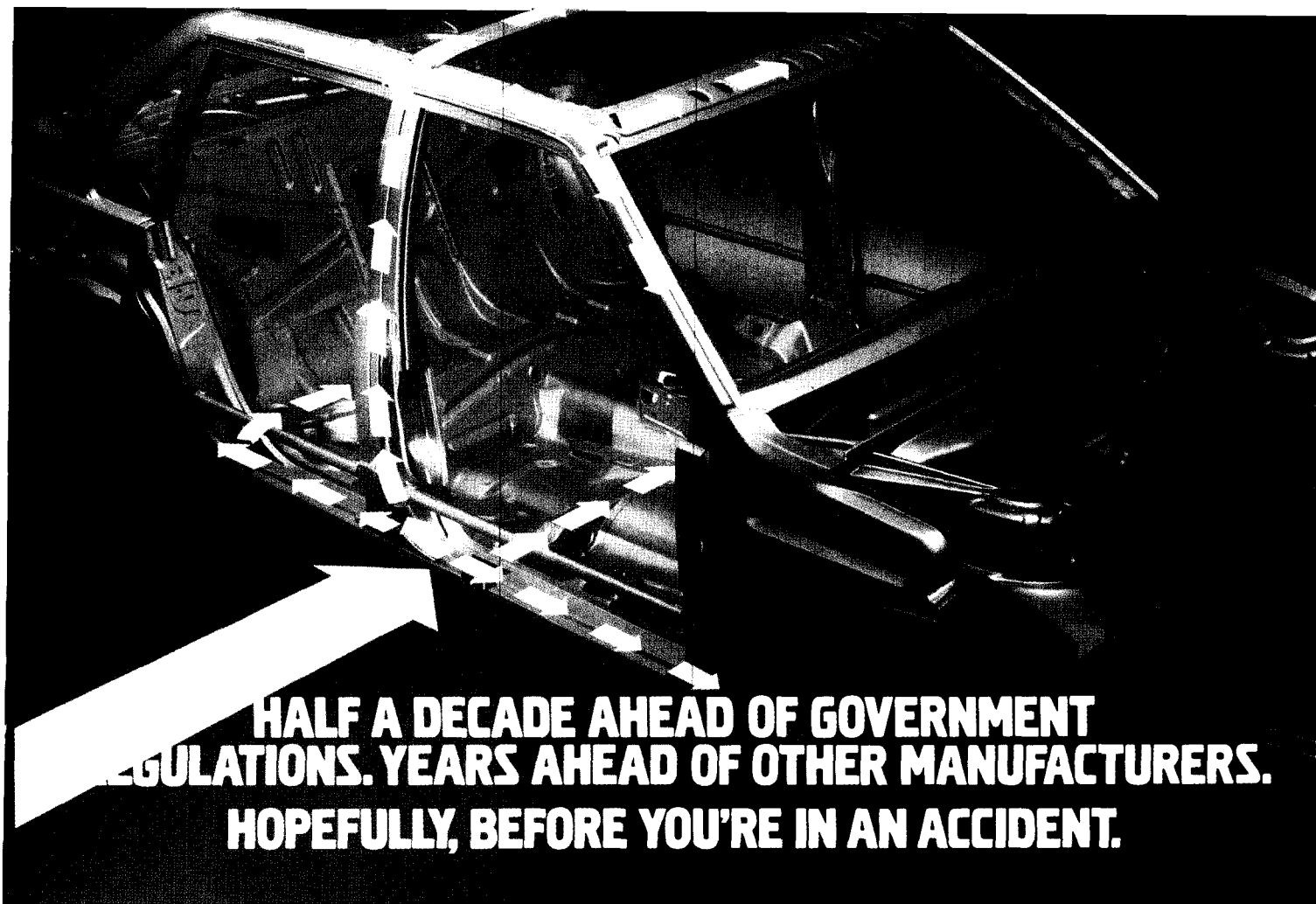
The closing of the sentence above from Lincoln's early Lyceum speech (“to the latest generation”) gives a premonition of famous statements to come.

*The fiery trial through which we pass,
will light us down,
(in honor or dishonor)
to the latest generation.*

Those words to Congress in 1862 were themselves forecast in Lincoln's Peoria address of 1854.

*If we do this,
we shall not only have saved the Union;
but we shall have so saved it,
as to make, and to keep it,
forever worthy of the saving.
We shall have so saved it,
that the succeeding millions
of free happy people,
the world over,
shall rise up,
and call us blessed, to the latest generations.*

It would be wrong to think that Lincoln moved toward the plain style of the Gettysburg Address just by writing shorter, simpler sentences. Actually, that address ends with a very long sentence—eighty-two words, almost a third of the whole talk's length. So does the Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln's second most famous piece of eloquence: its final sentence runs to seventy-five words. Because of his early experiments, Lincoln's prose acquired a flexibility of structure, a rhythmic pacing, a variation in length of words and phrases and clauses and sentences, that make his sentences move “naturally,” for all their density and scope. We get inside his verbal workshop when we see how he recast the suggested conclusion to his First Inaugural given him by William Seward. Every sentence is improved, in rhythm, emphasis, or clarity:



It could very well be the most dangerous of accidents.

In 1990, of the nearly 6.5 million police-reported accidents on American roads, 31% were side impacts resulting in 84,000 deaths or injuries.*

"Side impacts put occupants in a very vulnerable position," states Stefan Nilsson of Volvo's Safety Laboratory in Sweden. "In front and rear crashes, you have the protection of energy-absorbing structures. In head-on collisions, there's a driver's side air bag, but many people don't realize air bags only inflate in a narrow range of frontal collisions."

While Volvos have had reinforced steel bars in the side doors for years, Volvo's new Side Impact Protection System (SIPS) goes beyond that, changing the very way a car

deals with the forces created in a side impact. The passenger cage has been redesigned to help spread out the energy of a side impact through the entire frame. Energy is dissipated. The likelihood of vehicle intrusion reduced.

"SIPS is a breakthrough for the industry," says Nilsson. "Already we are seeing significant results from SIPS in our crash testing and computer modeling."

Regulation was recently passed that says that by model year 1997 all new cars sold in the U.S. must meet new side impact standards. Today, Volvo 940, 960 and 740 series cars, with SIPS standard, already meet those more demanding requirements.

"No car can offer 100% protection," comments Nilsson, "but with things like energy-absorbing structures, air bags, and now SIPS, we are getting closer."

Drive safely.

VOLVO

Seward

I close.

We are not, we must not be
aliens or enemies, but
fellow-countrymen and
brethren.

Although passion has
strained our bonds of affec-
tion too hardly, they must
not, I am sure they will not,
be broken.

The mystic chords which,
proceeding from so many
battle-fields and so many
patriot graves, pass through
all the hearts and all the
hearthstones in this broad con-
tinent of ours, will yet har-
monize in their ancient mus-
ic when breathed upon by
the guardian angel of the
nation.

Lincoln's lingering monosyllables in the first sentence seem to cling to the occasion, not wanting to break off the communication on which the last hopes of union depend. He simplified the next sentence using two terms ("enemies," "friends") where Seward had used two *pairs* ("aliens" and "enemies," "fellow-countrymen" and "brethren"), but Lincoln repeated "enemies" in the urgent words "We must not be enemies." The next sentence was also simplified, to play off against the long, complex image of the concluding sentence. The "chords of memory" are not musical sounds. Lincoln spelled "chord" and "cord" indiscriminately; they are the same etymologically. He used the geometric term "chord" for a line across a circle's arc. On the other hand, he spelled the word "cord" (in an 1858 speech) when calling the Declaration of Independence an electrical wire sending messages to American hearts: "the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together."

Seward knew that the chord to be breathed on was a string (of a harp or lute, though his "chords proceeding from graves" is grotesque). Lincoln stretched the cords between graves and living hearts, as in his earlier image of the Declaration. Seward also got ethereal when he talked of harmonies that come from breathing on the chords. Lincoln was more believable (and understandable) when he had the better angels of our nature touch the cords to swell the chorus of union. Finally, Seward made an odd picture to get his jingle of chords passing through "hearts and hearthstones." Lincoln stretched the chords from graves to hearts and hearthstones. He got rid of the crude rhyme by making a chiasmic (a-b-b-a) cluster

Lincoln

I am loth to close.

We are not enemies, but
friends. We must not be
enemies.

Though passion may have
strained, it must not break
our bonds of affection.

The mystic chords of
memory, stretching from
every battle-field, and pa-
triot grave, to every living
heart and hearthstone, all
over this broad land, will
yet swell the chorus of the
Union, when again
touched, as surely they
will be, by the better an-
gels of our nature.

of "living heart and hearthstone"; the vital heart is contrasted with the inert hearth-stuff. Seward's clumsy image of stringing together these two different items has disappeared. Lincoln gave to Seward's fustian a pointedness of imagery, a euphony and interplay of short and long sentences and phrases, that lift the conclusion almost to the level of his own best prose.

The spare quality of Lincoln's prose did not come naturally but was worked at. Lincoln not only read aloud, to think his way into sounds, but also wrote as a way of ordering his thought. He had a keenness for analytical exercises. He was proud of the mastery he achieved over Euclid's *Elements*, which awed Herndon and others. He loved the study of grammar, which some think the most arid of subjects. Some claimed to remember his gift for spelling, a view that our manuscripts disprove. Spelling as he had to learn it (separate from etymology) is more arbitrary than logical. It was the logical side of language—the principles of order as these reflect patterns of thought or the external world—that appealed to him.

He was also, Herndon tells us, laboriously precise in his choice of words. He would have agreed with Mark Twain that the difference between the right word and the nearly right one is that between lightning and a lightning bug. He said, debating Douglas, that his foe confused a similarity of words with a similarity of things—as one might equate a horse chestnut with a chestnut horse.

As a speaker, Lincoln grasped Twain's later insight: "Few sinners are saved after the first twenty minutes of a sermon." The trick, of course, was not simply to be brief but to say a great deal in the fewest words. Lincoln justly boasted of his Second Inaugural's seven hundred words, "Lots of wisdom in that document, I suspect." The same is even truer of the Gettysburg Address, which uses fewer than half that number of words.

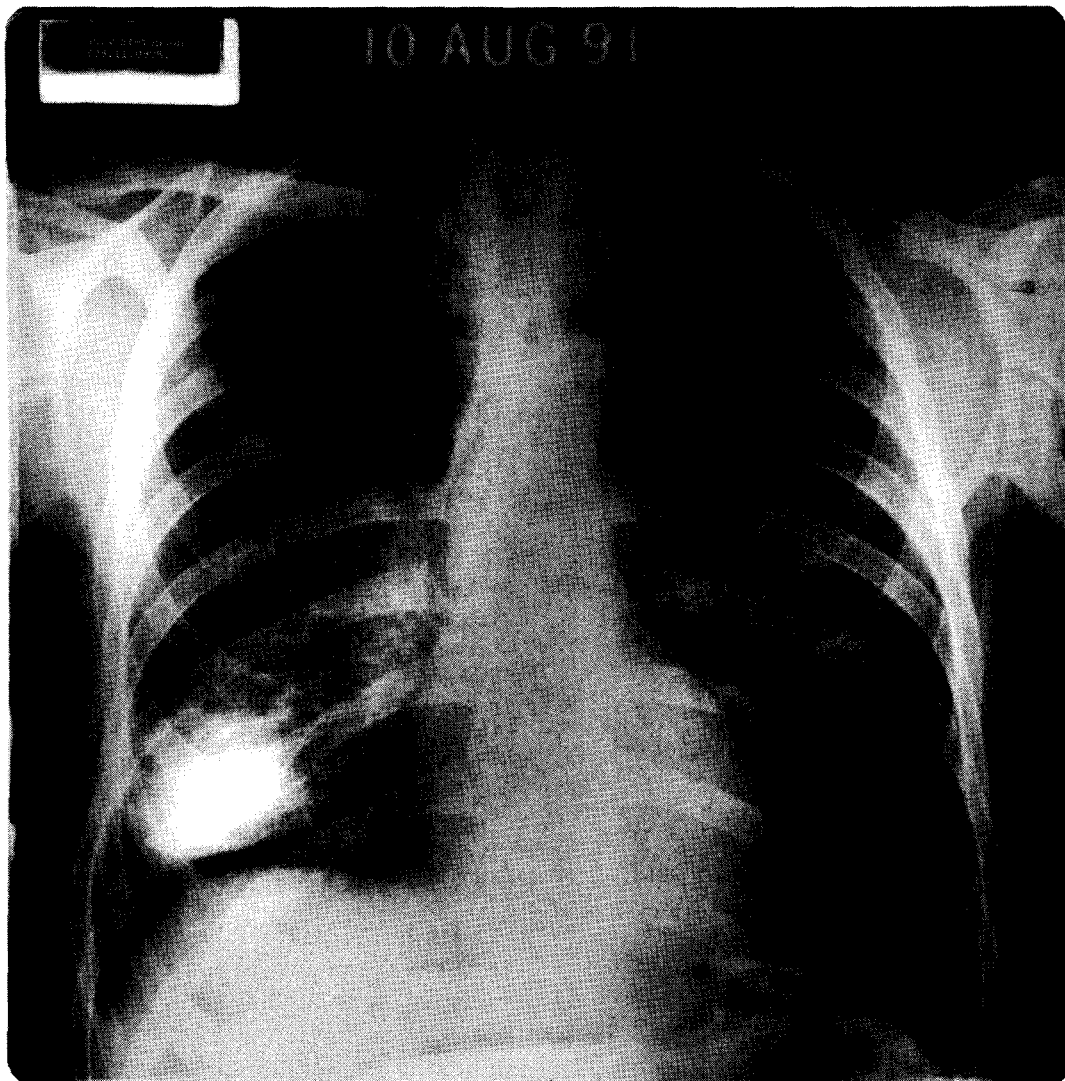
The unwillingness to waste words shows up in the address's telegraphic quality—the omission of coupling words, a technique rhetoricians call asyndeton. Triple phrases sound as to a drumbeat, with no "and" or "but" to slow their insistency:

*we are engaged . . .
We are met . . .
We have come . . .*

*we can not dedicate . . .
we can not consecrate . . .
we can not hallow . . .*

*that from these honored dead . . .
that we here highly resolve . . .
that this nation, under God . . .*

*government of the people,
by the people,
for the people . . .*



Because he works for a small company,
the prognosis isn't good for his fellow workers either.

A serious illness in a small company can be tragic for other employees as well. When renewing its health insurance plan the company may be charged excessively high premiums and be forced to drop the plan.

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Despite the suggestive images of birth, testing, and re-birth, the speech is surprisingly bare of ornament. The language itself is made strenuous, its musculature easily traced, so that even the grammar becomes a form of rhetoric. By repeating the antecedent as often as possible, instead of referring to it indirectly by pronouns like "it" and "they," or by backward referential words like "former" and "latter," Lincoln interlocks his sentences, making of them a constantly self-referential system. This linking up by explicit repetition amounts to a kind of hook-and-eye method for joining the parts of his address. The rhetorical devices are almost invisible, since they use no figurative language. (I highlight them typographically here.)

AS IN THE DAYS OF THE PROPHETS

Love took the words right out of my mouth.
Not the making of love, the clinging and plunge,
The tongue's deep spiral, but the acts of days,
The sun up and down, the dish and the pot,
The light on the head of first one, then another,
The stairs unswept, the bed cold, the light out,
The papers brought in, the bed made, the money
Paid out, the bulbs dug, the children reverent
At what came next, the rise and the fall
Of coral and ocher, the folding and sorting,
The endless numbering of things, the walking
With babies in slings, in backpacks, in strollers,
Then hand in hand, then the hand dropped
And one of them up to my shoulder, eyeing,
Before I do, the hawk or the waxwing,
The junco, the hermit thrush in the depths
Of our gun-shot city, and just to the south
The great hill we climb, by season, together,
Alone, in pairs, in trios, the slapping
Of mud from our shoes on the back steps again,
The chastening memory of the otter plunging
In the icy water of his adequate tank
At the base of that hill, and love made the otter,
Love made the mud, the ice-slicked bark,
The meals, the shining heads, and the sleep,
The risings, the children, the hawk's spiral.
Love took the words right out of my mouth.

—Christopher Jane Corkery

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, *a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated* to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in A GREAT CIVIL WAR, testing whether *that nation*, or any nation *so conceived and so dedicated*, can long endure.

We are met on a great *BATTLE-FIELD* of *THAT WAR*.

We have come to *dedicate* a portion of *THAT FIELD*, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that *that nation* might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not *dedicate*—we can not *consecrate*—we can not hallow—this ground.

The brave men, living and dead, *who struggled here*, have *consecrated* it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us the living, rather, to be *dedicated* here to the unfinished work which they *who fought here* have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here *dedicated* to the great task remaining before us—that from *THESE HONORED DEAD* we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—

that we here highly resolve that *THESE DEAD* shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Each of the paragraphs printed separately here is bound to the preceding and the following by some resumptive element. Only the first and last paragraphs do not (because they cannot) have this two-way connection to their setting. Not all of the "pointer" phrases replace grammatical antecedents in the technical sense. But Lincoln makes them perform analogous work. The nation is declared to be "dedicated" before the term is given further uses for individuals present at the ceremony, who repeat (as it were) the national consecration. The compactness of the themes is emphasized by this reliance on a few words in different contexts.

A similar linking process is performed, almost subliminally, by the repeated pinning of statements to *this* field, *these* dead, who died *here*, for *that* kind of nation. The reverential touching, over and over, of the charged moment and place leads Lincoln to use "here" eight times in the short text, the adjectival "that" five times, and "this" four times. The spare vocabulary is not impoverishing, because of the subtly interfused constructions, in which the classicist Charles Smiley identified "two antitheses, five cases of anaphora, eight instances of balanced phrases and clauses, thirteen alliterations." "Plain speech" was never less artless. Lincoln forged a new lean language to humanize and redeem the first modern war.

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Lincoln not only presented the Declaration of Independence in a new light, as a matter of founding law, but put its central proposition, equality, in a newly favored position.

most Americans thought about the nation's founding. Lincoln did not argue law or history, as Daniel Webster had. He *made* history. He came not to present a theory but to impose a symbol, one tested in experience and appealing to national values, expressing emotional urgency in calm abstractions. He came to change the world, to effect an intellectual revolution. No other words could have done it. The miracle is that these words did. In his brief time before the crowd at Gettysburg he wove a spell that has not yet been broken—he called up a new nation out of the blood and trauma.

Making Union a Reality

JAMES MCPHERSON HAS DESCRIBED LINCOLN AS A revolutionary in terms of the economic and other physical changes he effected, whether intentionally or not—a valid point that McPherson discusses sensibly. But Lincoln was a revolutionary in another sense as well—the one Willmoore Kendall denounced him for: he not only presented the Declaration of Independence in a new light, as a matter of founding law, but put its central proposition, equality, in a newly favored position as a principle of the Constitution (whereas, as the *Chicago Times* noticed, the Constitution never uses the word). What had been mere theory in the writings of James Wilson, Joseph Story, and Daniel Webster—that the nation preceded the states, in time and importance—now became a lived reality of the American tradition. The results of this were seen almost at once. Up to the Civil War “the United States” was invariably a plural noun: “The United States are a free country.” After Gettysburg it became a singular: “The United States is a free country.” This was a result of the whole mode of thinking that Lincoln expressed in his acts as well as his words, making union not a mystical hope but a constitutional reality. When, at the end of the address, he referred to government “of the people, by the people, for the people,” he was not, like Theodore Parker, just praising popular government as a Transcendentalist’s ideal. Rather, like Webster, he was saying that America was *a* people accepting as its great assignment what was addressed in the Declaration. This people was “conceived” in 1776, was “brought forth” as an entity whose birth was datable (“four score and seven years” before) and placeable (“on this continent”), and was capable of receiving a “new birth of freedom.”

Thus Abraham Lincoln changed the way people thought about the Constitution. For a states'-rights advocate like Willmoore Kendall, for an “original intent” advocate like Edwin Meese, the politics of the United States has all been misdirected since that time. The Fourteenth Amendment was, in their view, ultimately bootlegged into the Bill of Rights. But as soon as it was ratified, the Amendment began doing harm, in the eyes of strict constructionists.

As Robert Bork put it:

Unlike the [Fourteenth Amendment's] other two clauses, [the due-process clause] quickly displayed the same capacity to accommodate judicial constitution-making which Taney had found in the fifth amendment's version.

Bork, too, thinks that equality as a national commitment has been sneaked into the Constitution. There can be little doubt about the principal culprit. As Kendall put it, Lincoln's use of the phrase from the Declaration about all men being equal is an attempt “to wrench from it a single proposition and make that our supreme commitment.”

We should not allow [Lincoln]—not at least without some probing inquiry—to “steal” the game, that is, to accept his interpretation of the Declaration, its place in our history, and its meaning as “true,” “correct,” and “binding.”

But, as Kendall himself admitted, the professors, the textbooks, the politicians, the press, *have* overwhelmingly accepted Lincoln's vision. The Gettysburg Address has become an authoritative expression of the American spirit—as authoritative as the Declaration itself, and perhaps even more influential, since it determines how we read the Declaration. For most people now, the Declaration means what Lincoln told us it means, as he did to correct the Constitution without overthrowing it. It is this correction of the spirit, this intellectual revolution, that makes attempts to go back beyond Lincoln to some earlier version so feckless. The proponents of states' rights may have arguments to advance, but they have lost their force, in the courts as well as in the popular mind. By accepting the Gettysburg Address, and its concept of a single people dedicated to a proposition, we have been changed. Because of it, we live in a different America. □



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SEASON PREVIEW

America's top summer blues festivals

CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL

Chicago, Illinois
June 5-7

Blues, a year-round windy-city staple, are served all weekend long during this nine-year-old festival. The music plays from noon to 9 p.m. on Friday and from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Half a million blues fans will gather around three separate stages in Grant Park to take in the tunes. This year's lineup includes Billy Branch and the Sons of Blues, Jimmy Dawkins, Little Milton Campbell, Jimmy Johnson, Eddy Clearwater, Laverne Baker, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Ann Peebles, Otis Clay, and Albert Collins. Entrance to all performances is free. For more information: Mayor's Office of Special Events, City Hall, 121 North LaSalle St., Room 703, Chicago, IL 60602; (312) 744-3315.

MONTEREY BAY BLUES FESTIVAL

Monterey, California
June 27-28

Monterey Fairgrounds will open its gates at 10 a.m. on Saturday for its seventh annual festival of high-energy blues. Acts appearing on the Arena Stage include The Pontiac, Johnny "Clyde" Copeland, Ruth Brown, and two recent Grammy Award winners, Robert Cray and Delbert McClinton. The 15 acts at the Garden Stage include well-known blues jammers from the past and present: Lady Bianca, Victory Temple Sanctuary Choir, Bobby Reed, and the William Clarke Band. Ticket prices range from \$16 to \$48. For more information or tickets: Monterey Bay Blues Festival, Box 1400, Seaside, CA 93955; (408) 394-2652.



WATERFRONT BLUES FESTIVAL

Portland, Oregon
July 2-5

A suggested donation of \$2 and a can of food buy you admission to this four-day blues jamboree on Portland's waterfront. Back Porch Blues start the festival rolling at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, followed by Smokin' Joe Kubek and Savoy Brown, among others. Friday through Sunday, performances begin at noon and continue until 10 p.m. Among the more than 40 acts scheduled to perform, headliners include Wailin' Al Walker, Luther Guitar Jr. Johnson, and Lonnie Mack. The festival is held at Tom McCall Waterfront Park. For more information: Oregon Food Bank, 2540 NE Riverside Way, Portland, OR 97211; (503) 282-0555.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BLUES FESTIVAL

Davenport, Iowa
July 3-5

Now into its eighth year, this festival offers three jam-packed days of blues on the dual stages of LeClaire Park, on the banks of

the Mississippi River. The highlights will include Charlie Musselwhite, Irma Thomas, Larry McCray, and Jessie Mae Hemphill. Each day barbecue food will be served, followed by after-hours blues sessions at selected local clubs. Tickets cost \$5 per day. For more information or tickets: Mississippi Valley Blues Festival, Box 2014, Davenport, IO 52809; (800) 747-7800 or (319) 326-7729.

KANSAS CITY BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL

Kansas City, Missouri
July 25-26

This free outdoor festival in pristine Penn Valley Park offers both blues and jazz. Over two days, 28 bands will play from noon to 8:30 p.m. to a crowd of some 130,000. This year's lineup includes Delbert McClinton, Koko Taylor, and the Jay McShann Big Band. And Kansas City's musical heritage will be celebrated with stories and demonstrations. For more information: Convention and Visitors Bureau of Greater Kansas City, 1100 Main St., Suite 2550, Kansas City, MO 64105; (800) 530-5266 or (816) 221-5242.

W.C. HANDY MUSIC FESTIVAL

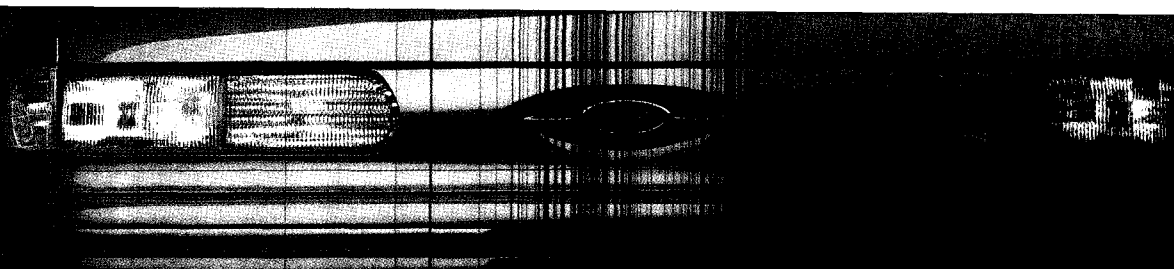
Florence, Alabama
August 2-8

Alabama proudly remembers and justly pays tribute to its very own "Father of the Blues," William Christopher Handy. For the past 11 years, Florence has held a week-long blues and jazz extravaganza in Handy's honor. Local cafés, inns, bars, and restaurants provide the myriad stages for this eclectic meeting of guitars and horns. Past performers have included Dizzy Gillespie, Manhattan Transfer, and Ramsey Lewis. A mix of art exhibits, music workshops, and crafts and fashion shows will accompany the music throughout the week. Tickets range in price from free to \$15. For more information or tickets: Music Preservation Society, Inc., Box 1827, Florence, AL 35631; (205) 766-7642.

SAN FRANCISCO BLUES FESTIVAL

San Francisco, California
September 25-27

San Francisco is the home of the oldest ongoing blues event in the country, now in its 20th year. The festival touches on every variation of blues—from Texas guitar styles to Louisiana's zydeco and Cajun traditions to down-home West Coast rhythm and blues. A free noontime concert at the downtown Justin Herman Plaza will kick off the festivities, followed by two days of ticketed performances at the Great Meadow at Fort Mason, overlooking San Francisco Bay. Tickets range in price from \$12 to \$22. For more information or tickets: San Francisco Blues Festival, 573 Hill St., San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 826-6837.



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A Short Story



Ichthyology

by David Vann



MY MOTHER GAVE BIRTH ON ADAK ISLAND, a small hunk of rock and snow far out on the Aleutian chain, in the middle of the Bering Sea. My father was serving two years as a dentist in the Navy; he had wanted Alaska because he liked hunting and fishing, but he obviously had not known about Adak at the time of his request. Had my mother known, she would have scratched out the request herself. Given enough information, my mother has never made the wrong choice.

So it was that she refused to have her sweltering, jaundiced baby yanked out of Adak's underground naval hospital and thrown into the jet that sat waiting on the runway for more than six hours. Because my temperature was 105° and still climbing, the doctors and my father recommended that I be flown to the mainland, to a real hospital (no one on Adak survived even a mild heart attack while we were there—no one), but my mother refused. She was certain, with what my father always described as an animal, instinctive fear, that the moment I was borne aloft, I would perish. She placed me in an ordinary white bathtub filled with cold water, and there I survived. Flourished, even. My orange, blotchy skin gradually calmed to a healthy baby

pink, my limbs unlocked, and I flailed my legs in the waters until she lifted me out and we both slept.

When my father had finished his sentence with the Navy, we moved to Ketchikan, an island in southeastern Alaska, where he bought a dental practice and, three years later, a fishing boat. The boat was a new twenty-three-foot Uniflite fiber-glass cabin cruiser. Still wearing his dental smock beneath his jacket, he launched the boat late on a Friday afternoon as we cheered from shore. He slipped it into its stall in the docks, and the next morning he stood on the edge of those docks looking down thirty feet through clear, icy Alaskan water to where the *Snow Goose* sat like a white mirage on the rounded gray stones. My father had named it the *Snow Goose* because he had been filled with dreams of its white hull flying over the waves, but he had forgotten to put in the drain plugs the afternoon of the launching. Unlike my mother, he had neither eyes nor ears for matters below the surface.

That summer, as we flew back over the waves from a day of fishing (my father had had the *Snow Goose* raised and cleaned, proof that persistence can sometimes make up for a lack of vision), I would be on the open but high-sided back deck with the day's catch of halibut, flopping into the air with them each time

He gazed into the eyes of the orange-striped fish and for a moment felt as if he, too, were floating, rocking, oddly out of place

my father sailed over one wave and smashed into the next. The halibut themselves lay flat, like gray-green dogs on the white deck of the boat, their large brown eyes looking up at me hopefully until I whacked them with a hammer. My job was to keep them from flopping out of the boat. They had terrific strength in those wide, flat bodies, and with a good splat of their tails they could send themselves two or three feet in the air, their white undersides flashing. Between us a kind of understanding developed: if they didn't flop, I didn't smash their heads with the hammer. But sometimes, when the ride was especially wild and we were all thrown again and again into the air and their blood and slime was all over me, I gave out a few extra whacks, an inclination of which I am ashamed. And the other halibut, with their round brown eyes and long, judicious mouths, did see.

When we docked after those trips, my mother would check everything over, drain plugs included, while my father stood by. I played on my knees on the weathered boards of the dock, and once saw a terrifying creature crawl from a rusty tin can that had been knocked on its side. Repulsed by those barbarous legs, I howled and went over backward into the water. I was fished out soon enough, and thrown in a hot shower, but I didn't forget what I had seen. No one had told me about salamanders—I honestly never had dreamed of amphibians—but on first sight I knew they were a step in the wrong direction.

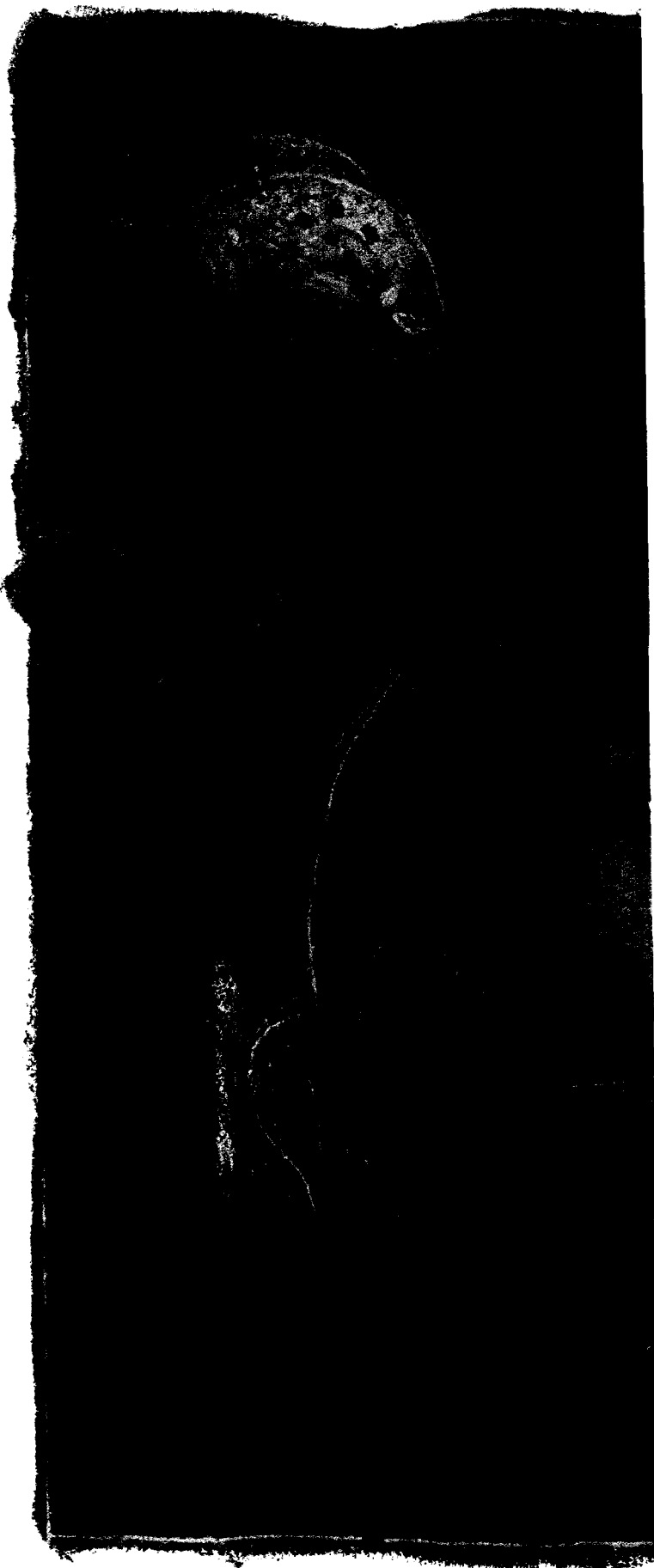
Shortly after this, when I was nearing five years old, my father began to believe that he, too, had made steps in the wrong direction, and he set out in search of the kinds of experiences he felt he had been denied. My mother was only the second woman he had ever dated, but to this list he now added the dental hygienist who worked for him. The nights at our house were soon filled with a general keening of previously unimaginable variation and persistence.

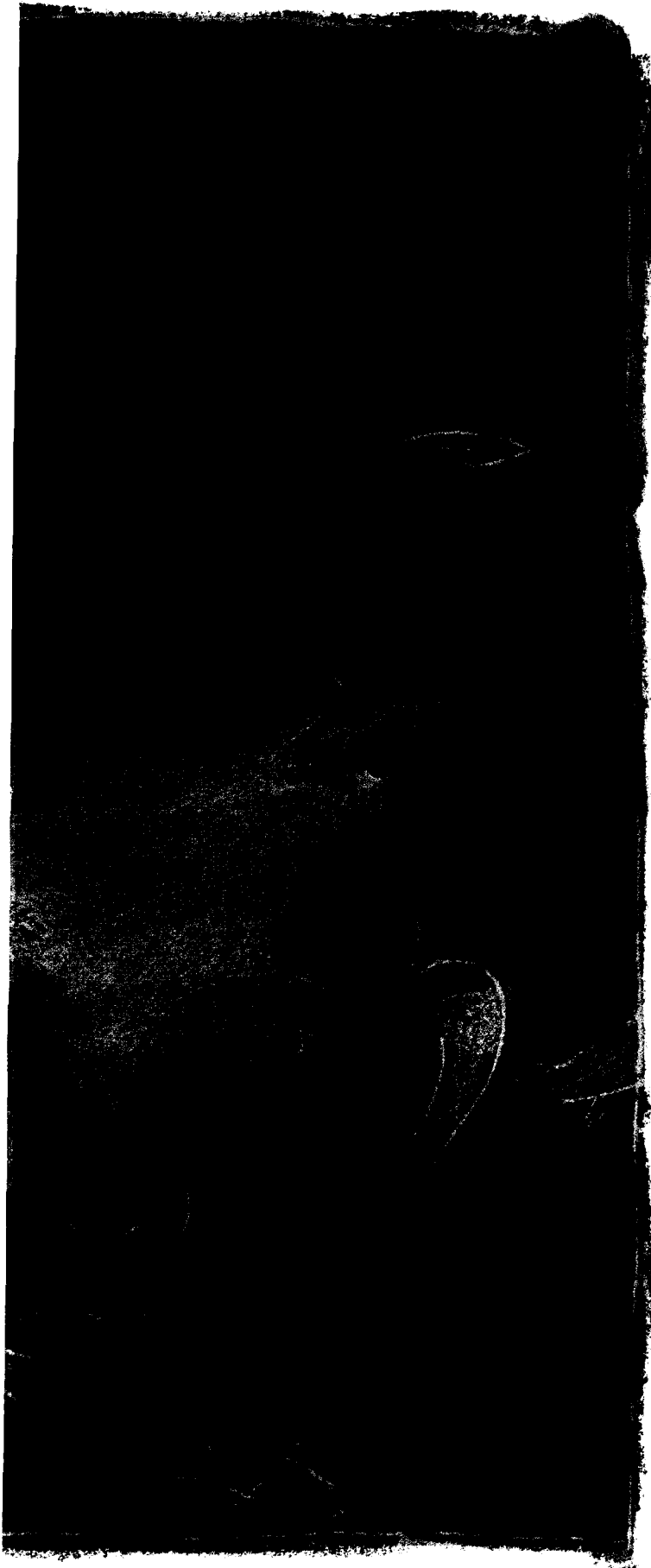
I abandoned ship one night when my father was crying alone in the living room and my mother was breaking things in their bedroom. She didn't utter any human sounds, but I could chart her progress around their room by imagining the sources of wood snapping, glass shattering, and plaster crumbling. I slipped out into the soft, watery world of Alaskan rain-forest night, soundless except for the rain, and wandered in my pajamas down the other side of the street, peering in dark, low living-room windows and listening at doors, until at one door I heard a humming sound that was unfamiliar to me.

I went around to the side of the house, opened the screen door, and pressed my ear to cold wood. The sound seemed lower now, almost a moan, barely audible.

The door was locked, but I lifted up the rubber corner of the welcome mat and, just as at our house, the key was there. So I went in.

I discovered that the buzzing sound was the air-pump filter on a fish tank. Something about wandering alone through someone else's house was awful, and I moved





solemnly across the linoleum to take a seat high on a kitchen stool. I watched the orange-and-black-striped fish suck at pebbles and spit them out. The tank contained larger rocks, too: lava rocks with dark caves and crannies out of which peered many tiny round fish eyes, shiny as foil. Some had bright red-and-blue bodies, others had bright orange bodies.

I thought perhaps the fish were hungry. I went to the refrigerator and saw sweet pickles, opened the jar, and brought it back for the fish to see. I found slots on top of the tank, toward the back, and dropped the pickles in, one or two at first, then the whole jar, slice by slice, and finally poured the juice in, too, so that the tank water swelled up and ran in beads over the side.

I stared at the pickle slices floating brightly in with the fish, some of them sinking and twirling. They bounced slowly over the bright pink and blue rocks below. The orange-striped fish had all flashed about the tank as I had been pouring, but they, too, now moved slowly. They leaned a little to one side as they swam, and several rested on the rocks. Others stretched their long, see-through cartilage mouths at the surface every few moments and sucked for air. Their side fins rippled as delicately as fine lace.

When the pickle slices had settled more, they rocked like sleeping fish just above the pink and blue gravel, and the real fish rocked silently beside them, as if in gentle groves of eelgrass and sunken lily pads. The image was beautiful, and in that moment of beauty I strained forward.

I pressed my hands and face against the glass and gazed into the mute black core of one of those silvery eyes. I felt as if I, too, were floating, gently rocking, oddly out of place, and in that flicker of a moment I caught myself feeling the rocking and, perceiving myself perceiving, realized that I was I. This distracted me; then I forgot what had distracted me, lost interest in the fish, and, after slapping my feet across the linoleum of the kitchen floor, passed again into the soft, dark rain.

THREE YEARS LATER, AFTER MY MOTHER AND I had moved down to California, I was given a fish tank of my own and decided to become an ichthyologist. My parents had separated, of course, startled nearly as much by what I had done as by what they themselves had been doing all along. Any connection between my vandalism and their nighttime exchanges was completely mysterious to them.

My first aquarium was only a clear plastic tray of the kind most often used to hold nuts and bolts. In it were two goldfish I had won at the county fair and some gravel my mother had bought at Sal's Fishworld on our way home.

I watched over those thin, pale goldfish, but the tray

had no cover, and after our cat, Smokey, snagged them with his paw and ate them on our counter top as I watched, unable to move, my mother took me down to Sal's and bought a proper ten-gallon tank with a bubble filter, more gravel, a wide-leaved plastic plant, a piece of volcanic rock with a hole in it, a few goldfish, and even one of those orange-and-black-striped fish I knew from Ketchikan, which I now discovered were called clown loaches.

We watched those fish every evening, cleaned their tank every weekend, and also survived the occasional ich plague: a sudden, mysterious proliferation of white spots on fins and tails that threatened to kill them all.

We buried the first of the deceased in elaborate ceremonies, during which my mother would sit beside me on her knees in the dirt and I would wear an old white bed-sheet. The fish themselves were always wrapped in many

layers of toilet paper, placed in small boxes, and buried six inches under, where the cat wouldn't dig them up.

Soon we just flushed the fish down the toilet and replaced them, but even then they were all I thought about. I wrote reports on them at school in lieu of book reports. My elementary school teachers never seemed to catch on and apparently believed I had really read books titled *The Clown Loach*, *The Silver Dollars*, *The Iridescent Shark*, and *The Plecostemus, or Bottom-Sucker*. Everything in human life was to be found in that tank. Yellow-and-black angelfish floated delicately by, all glamour and glitz, while behind them their waste trailed in streamers. Suckers at the bottom of the tank ate this waste, spat it out in disgust, and roved on, still hungry. And within five minutes of placing two new silver dollars in the tank, I saw real brutality. These silver dollars were large, thin fish, nearly identical in shape and shine to the coins after which they had been named, and once out of their plastic bag from Sal's, they swam up on either side of my one lazy, boggle-eyed iridescent shark. This iridescent shark had been badly misnamed; he was in actuality no more than a long, thin goldfish with a shiny body and two large, bulbous eyes. The silver dollars were slick and merciless and knew how to work as a team. In one quick flash each went for an eye and sucked it out. They didn't even swallow, but let the round, billiard-ball eyes float dreamily down to the rocks, where they were ingested by the suckerfish.

My mother was swift in her retribution. The silver dollars were netted and flushed within minutes, and we spent that evening together watching the iridescent shark bump blindly into the sides of the tank, waiting for him to die.

GRATITUDE

Learn to be grateful for armchairs, where you fit like a nut in its shell. Consider that plum blossoms

happen twice: once in the vase, once as shadow. And these double windows and quadruple doors—all have been constructed to slow the passage of air, feet, time. You come through

in the morning and by afternoon, the day is something: a shadow's inches, a stanza, an emptied coffee cup.

And things have their correspondences: Cézanne's boy always walks toward you like the future. The chairs' foreheads gentle the clamor of unobserved cells in a room—as the face of your beloved answers for all of you.

Between the eye and its sighted object a chronicle of personality takes place. All you need to know about me is I love the piled-on rectangles of a room, a window admitting the hill's diagonal, birches' white strokes on a green band. Nearsighted eyes arrange the page at a slant, which the heart interprets as stairs.

—Jessica Hornik

AS WE SPENT THESE YEARS IN CALIFORNIA, LEADING steadily more circumscribed lives, my father ranged farther and farther up in Alaska, and everything he did seemed to lack sense. He had never enjoyed dentistry, and felt now that perhaps fishing was more what he wanted to do. In this I believe he was right, and he was certainly earnest, but he didn't think ahead very well. He sold his practice, ordered a beautiful, expensive, sixty-three-foot aluminum commercial fishing boat, to be completed before the halibut season, and persuaded my uncle to be the crew. They had fished together for sport all their lives, but neither of them had any experience on a commercial fishing boat, and they were to be the only two on board. My father's lone-explorer image of himself would have been undercut if he had worked first on another boat or had hired a captain.

He named this boat the *Osprey*. Whereas the *Snow Goose* was a bird that flew its white wings over the waves on short one- and two-day sport-fishing jaunts, the *Osprey* was a more wide-ranging creature. With wingspans of up



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to six feet, ospreys are known to soar far out over the waters in vast arcs and circles, and they often soar alone.

The *Osprey* was not finished on time, so my father and my uncle entered the season a month and a half late. In their hurry they fouled one of the halibut lines they had set, thus jamming for more than a week the huge hydraulic wheel that pulled the fish in, and of course they caught almost nothing. The loss of above \$100,000 that year on fishing alone left my father undaunted, however, because he had already entered the last beautiful, desperate, far-ranging circlings of his life.

My uncle tells of one night on the bridge of the boat when my father, having lost for the seventeenth consecutive time at gin rummy, instead of looking glum and muttering an insincere congratulation, curved his back suddenly and spread wide his arms. Standing up on his captain's chair amid the blue-white glow of radar and sonar, he stretched out his chin, tilted what my uncle remembers to this day as a distinctly curved beak, and squawked out, "Three degrees starboard!" My uncle adjusted the automatic pilot accordingly, and in the morning they set what was to be one of only three or four successful lines that trip.

This correlation between my father's predictions and actual success was rare, however. The hardware store he had also invested in that year collapsed, as did the price of gold, the IRS's patience with his tax dodges in South American countries (he was angry at having to pay Social Security, which, ironically enough, supported us after his death), and his relationship with his receptionist-turned-fiancée. In short, the year was not a good one. I spent all of four days with him, in mid-January.

Each night during that vacation, as I lay in a sleeping bag on the hotel-room floor at the foot of his bed, I heard his tossings and turnings until very late and sensed, with the assurance children sometimes have, that he wouldn't be my father for much longer. His movements came in cycles that were closing in steadily around him. He kicked wildly at the sheets, groaning in frustration, anger, and despair, until they billowed and ruffled like an off-shore wind. Then he sank, face-first, utterly resigned and collapsed, into his pillow to weep, before beginning the cycle again. I assumed all along that he thought I was no longer awake, since he had never to my knowledge let himself weep in front of anyone. But one night he spoke to me.

"I just don't know," he said aloud. "Harper, are you awake?"

"Yes."

"God, I just don't know."

That was our last communication. I didn't know either, and I wanted only to shrink farther down into my sleeping bag. He had a terrific pain in his head that painkillers couldn't reach, an airiness in his voice that was only be-

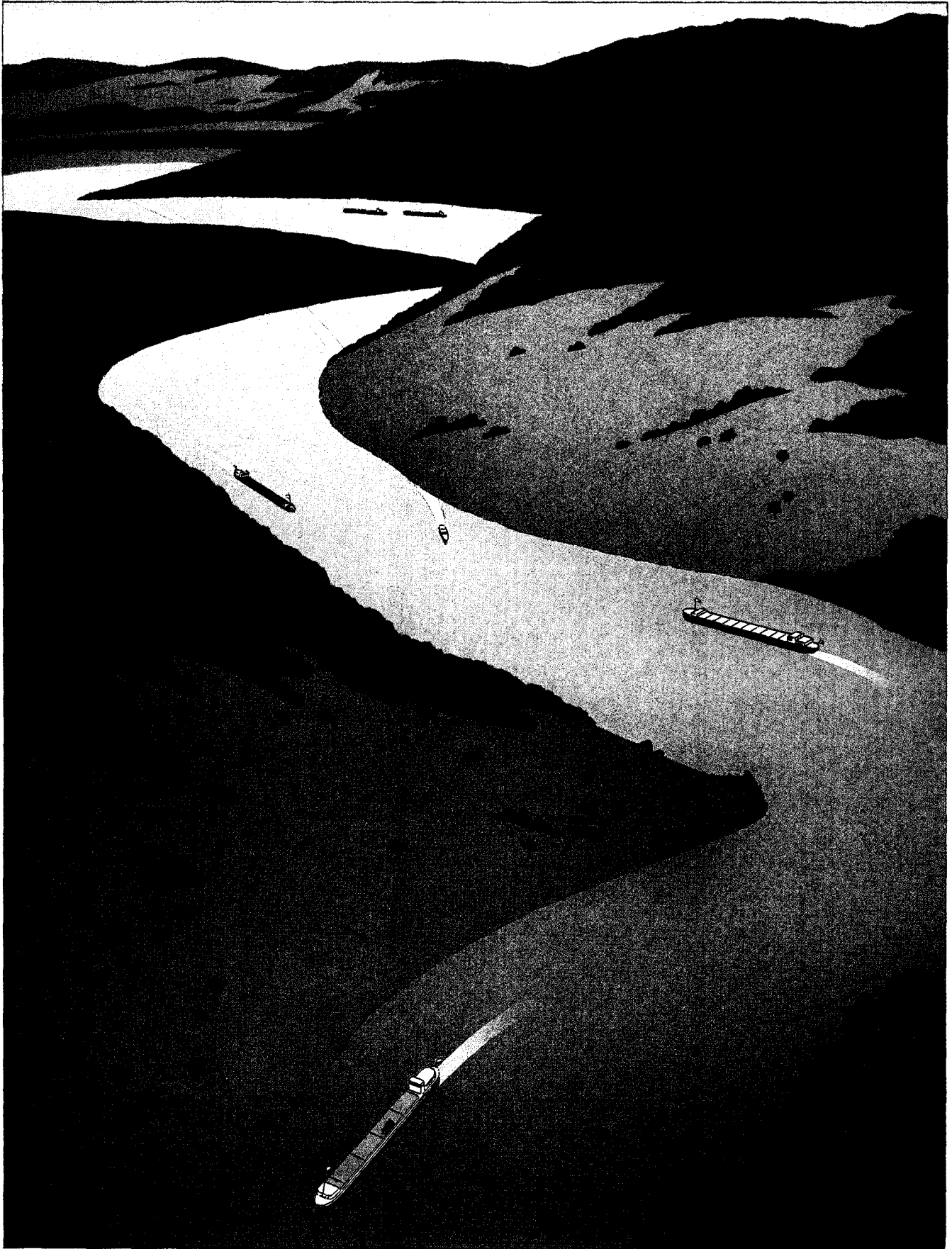
coming more hollow, and other mysteries of despair I didn't want to see or hear. I knew where he was headed, as we all did, but I didn't know why. And I didn't want to know.

My father ranged farther and farther that next year in the *Osprey*, changing gear for albacore off Mexico, then again for king crab in the Bering Sea. He began to sport-fish off the wide, high stern, and one day caught several large salmon, which he gutted on the spot. With the return to port and sale of the failed *Osprey* imminent (after two years of horrible losses he could no longer even get a loan), with the IRS closing in, and with no further flights imagined, he took his .44 magnum handgun from the cabin and walked back to stand alone on the bright silver stern under a heavy, gray-white sky and the cries of gulls, his boots slathered with the dark blood of freshly caught salmon. He may have paused for a moment to reflect, but I doubt it. His momentum was made up only of air, without the distraction of ground. He spattered himself amid the entrails of salmon; his remains were picked at by gulls for several hours before my uncle came up from the engine room and found him.

MY MOTHER AND I SURVIVED. NOT HAVING taken off to any heights, we had nowhere to fall. We drank clear bouillon soup with a few peas in it after my uncle called and told us the news, and in the evening, as the light in the sky faded to blue and then black, we sat in our living room, in the fluorescent glow of the fish tank, watching. The iridescent shark had learned to find his way around by now, and bumped less frequently into the glass. The empty sockets, their rawness originally laced with thin tracks of blood, had been soothed and covered over by an opaque white film. The tiger-striped archer fish, who was half jaw, half tail, who swam always at a forty-five-degree angle to the surface of the water, and who could spit sizable water pellets, was skimming his strong lower lip along the surface, waiting, and at some point—I have no idea when, since time stands still after a death, with no sensation of passing—I rose to bring him the jar of flies. I let one into the air space between hood and water, covered the hole again with tape, and sat down beside my mother to watch this ritual of the familiar, a relic from what our lives had been; but I knew now that I had lost interest. The archer fish tensed up, danced in a fluttering circle with his hooked lip at the surface the fulcrum, followed the mad flight of the fly with quiet deliberation, and spat his pellet of water with such celerity and yet so little movement that it seemed not to have happened at all. And yet the fly was there, mired in the water, sending off his million tiny ripples of panic. □

SHORTCUT

BY GUY BILLOUT



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In the second part of a two-part article the author continues his journey along the U.S.-Mexican border, through the unslakable fields of the Imperial Valley and the grim industrial landscapes of Nogales, Juárez, and Matamoros: locales that exemplify the environmental, economic, and social consequences of the fact that Mexico is our neighbor

THE BORDER

BY WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE

Denying the Desert

THE AIRPLANE IS NO BIGGER THAN A CAR, AND IT does not require roads. You take off from Lindbergh Field, in San Diego, and climb through the cool overcast, moisture rolling across the windshield. At two thousand feet, with your wing down, you slice into the clear sky and turn east along the border. Outside, the air warms by twenty degrees—a temperature inversion, which caps the city smoke and concentrates the Pacific moisture into cloud. On top it is a primeval morning. The sun is young but strong. The stratus below forms a brilliant white sea that laps against the mountains ahead. San Diego and Tijuana have vanished. Where the clouds dissolve, you fly across rugged uplands rising to four thousand feet.

Taller mountains stand to the north and south. The desert is brown and scruffy: dirt tracks scar the surface, ranch compounds nestle by wells in the shade of planted trees, mine shafts spew their tailings down the stony slopes. In places the U.S.-Mexican border is visible as a three-strand fence line, a line of demarcation between overgrazed pastures. Like opposing images, two highways swing up to the border, turn, and swing away. A railroad in the United States winds through the badlands, ducks through a tunnel, and emerges into Mexico; the rails are rusted and do not glint. Farther east the ground slopes down into a vast, elongated depression. You descend with it into an intensifying desert, until the altimeter reads less than zero and you are flying below sea level. Now the desert vanishes, replaced by miles of crops. Bugs splatter against your windshield. The green is shocking. It is an engineered color, a bit too bright, man-

ufactured with artificial rainfall pumped from manmade streams. The water comes from the Colorado River, which flows by just over the eastern horizon.

On the U.S. side this fertile lowland is known as the Imperial Valley. Four hundred and sixty thousand acres are irrigated in an average year. The fields are large and flawless, and the population is thin. In the winter, retirees from the Midwest fill the trailer parks. They are known with tentative affection as snowbirds. The Mexican side, called the Mexicali Valley, is about the same size but

more densely populated. More than half the land is held by *ejidos*, communal farms established during the land reforms of the 1930s. The *ejidos* are poor and inefficient, and many *ejidatarios* have fled to find work in the United States. Elsewhere in the Mexicali Valley the land is held in small farms and the towns are bursting with people. Tight against the boundary fence stands an unlikely city of a million people,

also named Mexicali. A century ago it did not exist. Now it is a state capital and an important industrial center. Like the fields, the city is an implant living by the uncertain grace of a troubled river.

The Colorado River has so many dams and diversions that by the time it approaches the border it contains barely enough water to meet the obligations of a treaty with Mexico. The last of the flow is diverted into the Mexicali canal system by the Morelos Dam, which lies on the U.S.-Mexican border near Yuma, Arizona. Below the dam the river is dry and the delta is dormant. No water has reached the Gulf in years. On a geologic scale this may prove to be a hiatus, since the reservoirs upstream are silting up. In the meantime, Imperial

**TENDING THE WATER-
WORKS, MEXICALI VALLEY**



farmers say, not a drop is wasted. What they mean is, not a drop goes unused.

In the town of Imperial, I found a pamphlet that boasted of abundant sunshine and mild temperatures in the winter, the rainy season. Here is the other three fourths of the story: The rest of the year is hell. Though the maximum temperature of 119° has been recorded only four times since 1914, almost every afternoon in the summer gets close. The soles of your desert boots melt on hot pavement. The pavement itself melts. They call it dry heat, but "parched" describes it better. The average annual rainfall is under three inches. In 1956 the year's total was 0.016 inch. June is the driest month, in which measurable rain has fallen only twice since 1914: 0.04 inch in 1948, and 0.01 inch in 1988.

Nonetheless, the soil is rich, and thanks to the legendary Imperial Irrigation District, the land is cultivated year-round. Water from the Colorado is diverted at the Imperial Dam and flows eighty-two miles through the All-American Canal. The All-American is a giant ditch, up to two hundred feet wide and twenty feet deep. It runs so close to the border that Mexican squatters throw hoses in and siphon water for their vegetable plots. The losses are insignificant. The three million acre-feet of river water diverted into the canal annually is roughly a fifth of the Colorado's total flow. (An acre-foot is the volume of

water necessary to cover one acre to a depth of one foot, which is the amount necessary to support a family of five in the United States for one year.) Ninety percent of the All-American water goes to the fields, each acre of which receives, on average, five and a half acre-feet every year. That is a lot of water, but evaporation and transpiration rates are high, and at least a foot is needed just to flush the soil and keep it from becoming too salty. The price is about \$11.50 per acre-foot, which is cheap compared with the \$1,000 per acre-foot that some water-starved California cities are now considering paying. The farmers have made the Imperial Valley one of the great agricultural areas of the world. The desert is never far from view, a reminder of the consequences if the water stopped flowing or became too expensive. The Irrigation District encourages this understanding in publications that juxtapose color photographs of sand dunes and crops. You have to admire the gall of the farmers: their biggest crop is alfalfa, a cow food that is notoriously wasteful of water. They farm in hell and thumb their noses at the devil.

At the sprawling headquarters of the Imperial Irrigation District, I talked to an official about the problems across the border in Mexicali. He said, "I'm just amazed that the Mexican farmer has to plant his crops on the basis of water availability. Our farmers plant on the basis of the market. Water is a given."



The Politics of Water

THE STRANGEST FEATURE OF MEXICALI CITY IS the way it is lopped off at the boundary. You can walk along the fence near the center of the city and look north into the fields of the Imperial Valley. Mexicali does not feel like a border town; it has wide, shaded avenues, elegant neighborhoods, good schools, a university, and a shopping mall. Still, it is a Third World city. Things often don't quite work—a telephone, a light switch, an appointment. The poor live in cramped central slums and in looser shantytowns wedged among developments on the outskirts. If they are lucky, they serve the wealthy, or toil in sweatshops, or sit on assembly lines in the new factories. If they are unlucky, they rely on their families, or work the streets. They do not seem resentful. The rich drive by in black cars with smoked windows and air-conditioners. You feel in such a place that you cannot see, that the contrasts blind you and all the middle ground has been obscured.

In downtown Mexicali, within yards of the fence, a tall, bearded man whose right leg has been amputated stands in the traffic in 110° heat. If you went there today, you would find him. He sets a can on the ground and does not move. Others stand nearby—a boy without hands, a man without sight, an Indian mother with a sick child. The tall

man watches them begging, and beneath his beard his expression *never changes*. He does not hustle or hope. I walked by him day after day, and finally stepped into the traffic to drop a few coins in his can. He said nothing, and did not look at me.

There are thousands of Chinese in Mexicali City, descendants of the valley's first farmers. They speak Spanish as well as Chinese, and own the restaurants where middle-class Mexicans eat lunch. I sat in one such restaurant and talked about the free-market reforms of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement, with an unreformed agronomist. He was a serious man, maybe fifty-five, weathered at the edges, who had fallen from favor at the federal agricultural office. He worried that I would use his name. He looked around nervously and said, "Mexico is too political—resistance to the new orthodoxy is unwise."

In the Mexicali Valley the new free-market orthodoxy means this: the irrigation districts are turned over to the users; water prices go up; crop supports and food subsidies are eliminated; farmers are encouraged to combine, expand, and plant for the market; commercial banking standards are applied to agricultural loans; eventually even the communal *ejidos* are privatized. The idea of selling *ejidos* has outraged much of agrarian Mexico, but not the Mexicali Valley. Like most of the north, it admires the U.S. model of undiluted competition.

The agronomist was different. He said, "We won't wait for a free-trade agreement. California growers are already buying up the best land. They use our soil, use our water, hire a few laborers, and send the crops home. We have been through this before." Then he looked embarrassed and said, "You understand, I have nothing against Americans personally."

I answered delicately, "I have wondered about sovereignty myself."

He continued, "Of course, we have an answer. We say, We can compete as equals."

"You don't agree?"

"A few farmers can compete, yes, but only a few. Imperial irrigates with three million acre-feet a year of high-quality Colorado water. We get one and a half million at Morelos, and in dry years not a bit more. We pump in another seven hundred and fifty thousand acre-feet from our wells—water that is often so salty it would kill crops if we didn't mix it with the surface supply."

Thinking of the waste on the other side of the border, I said, "The fact remains that you have two and a quarter million acre-feet."

He wagged his finger at me. "This tea we're drinking, it's irrigation water too. Our first priority has to be urban use. Look at the size of this city, and the industry moving in. The farmers get only fifty percent of the allotment."

I scribbled some calculations on a napkin. "In Imperial they farm the same acreage with two and a half times as much water."



He slipped on a pair of reading glasses and checked the figures. "You see, we need to conserve water, not imitate the United States."

I said, "I noticed alfalfa here, too."

But he was lost in his thoughts. He said, "Now we grow onions, broccoli, carrots, garlic, all the vegetables. Maybe only one crop a year, but enough to live on."

They also grow cotton, lots of it, which is another thirsty crop, and cannot be eaten. But I didn't want to quibble.

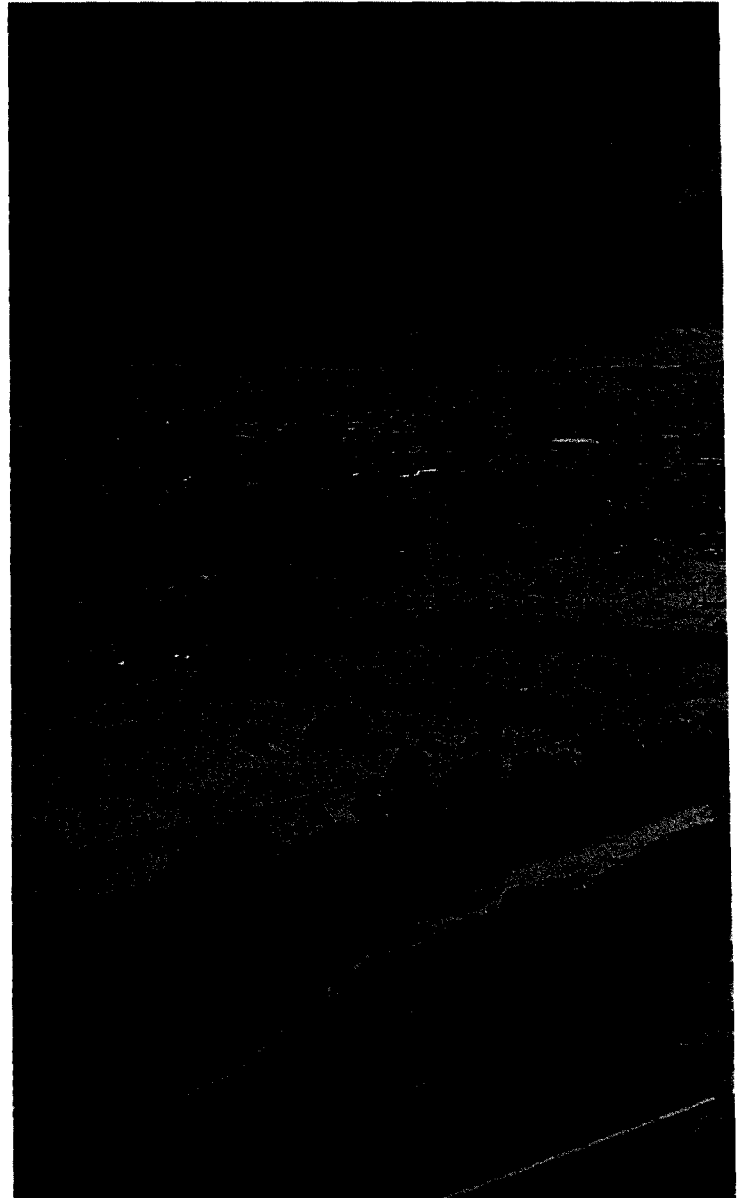
He said, "Can you imagine what this valley will look like when only the big farmers are left and all they grow is alfalfa? Think of the water use! They will return the valley to desert." At the end of the meal he broke open his fortune cookie and chewed it miserably; then he ate mine.

TO UNDERSTAND THE LAND, KEEP YOUR EYE ON the water. After the Morelos Dam, the last of the Colorado flows through Mexico in a canal called Alimentador Uno. The current is too strong, and the banks are too steep, to make swimming safe. But you can fish it, and the water is clear, cool, and beautiful to see. It shimmers in the sunlight and swirls under bridges. It gurgles through gates. It divides, and divides again, until, after fifty miles and perhaps a day, it gushes into the onion fields of Oscar Sanchez Lopez. Sanchez is a university-trained farmer, tall, balding, and thirty-five. He harvests the onions, crates them up, and ships them north to California. In this form, repackaged, the Colorado comes to Seattle, Chicago, and New York. We eat it with hamburgers raised on alfalfa.

Sanchez's farm lies close to the dry riverbed, on the best earth in the valley. Sanchez was waiting for me there. He acts and looks more like a diplomat than a farmer. He dresses neatly, carries a calculator in his shirt pocket, drives a Landcruiser, and speaks impeccable English. He spent a year as an exchange student in White Lake, South Dakota. "Nice folks," he said, and answered his car phone. It was his wife, calling from their home in Mexicali City; Sanchez commutes to work.

He took me for a tour of the farm. By U.S. standards it is a small operation: two hundred acres of well-drained soil, ten employees, nine tractors, three disks, two plows, two chisels, two cultivators, three planters, two sprayers, three pumps, and six hundred acres' worth of irrigation piping. Last year it produced 200,000 boxes of green onions, 70,000 boxes of zucchini, and 8,000 boxes of radishes—all sold to the United States. During the peak winter harvest four hundred laborers come to pick the crops, and to clean, sort, and pack them.

Sanchez works hard to meet the strict standards of his U.S. buyers. Nonetheless, his boxes get stamped MEXICAN and are worth less for it. He brought it up and then told me he didn't care. "I'm in this for the money and the challenge."



I asked why he sold exclusively to the United States.

"Because in Mexico there are always problems collecting. With the United States, business can be done over the telephone. You set a price; they send you a check."

Sanchez grows crops year-round, because he rents water rights from less energetic landowners; nonetheless, he worries constantly about his supply. He asked, "Did you read *Time* on the Colorado—how even after the drought ends, there will not be enough to go around?"

"But there's a treaty. You'll always receive your one and a half million."

"I don't trust the treaty if the drought continues."

Even within the treaty he has had problems in the past with the Mexicali Irrigation District. He said, "Last year we were doing a thousand boxes of zucchini a day, until suddenly they cut our water. Our production dropped to four hundred."

We went to a freshly planted onion field and watched



water cascading from rows of sprinklers. Sanchez squinted with an artist's eye and spoke about the wet reflection on the surface: "We'll water until the mirror is uniform."

The sprinklers were driven by a loud diesel pump, drawing eight gallons a second from a ditch. A muddy, bare-chested man stood next to it, clearing the intake. He watched us warily. Sanchez called him a loner, the pump man, the farm's most important worker. Through the worst summer heat he tends the pump unceasingly: he eats beside it and sleeps beside it, rolled in a blanket. I asked how much he made. Sanchez poked at his calculator and came up with \$23 a day.

The farm is flanked by a large canal, which runs next to train tracks and the paved highway to town. Along its length squatters have built shacks and planted vegetable gardens, which they irrigate illegally by siphoning water. Many of them have tapped into the power lines,

AT THE MORELOS DAM, THE LAST OF THE COLORADO

and recently some have installed television antennas. Squatters are a common

sight along all the Mexicali canals.

Later, at lunch, I said I had noticed something odd—that even on the border few people in Mexico speak English. I said, Think of Europe or Africa. Sanchez answered, It's changing now, and everyone wants to learn. There are English-only schools for children in Mexicali.

Because of the free-trade agreement?

Because of hope for it.

I asked him what hope he had.

He fussed over his calculator. "I hope it saves me ninety-three thousand and five hundred dollars in import fees."

The Maquiladoras

ALTHOUGH CAPITALISM IS A LATECOMER TO MEXICAN agriculture, the border does not otherwise want for evidence of its power. Three hundred miles east of the Imperial Valley lie two towns named Nogales. They stretch along a narrow valley about an hour's drive south of Tucson. The one in Arizona is gray and disheveled, but it has grown to about twenty thousand residents. Though the people are poor, by some standards the town has prospered. According to Governor Fife Symington, who mentioned Nogales last year in a *Wall Street Journal* article, taxable retail sales there exceed \$300 million a year, which is 50 percent more than in a town of the same size near Phoenix. The taxes impress the governor. What is more, much of the revenue comes from shoppers who do not live in Arizona—Mexicans, who stream through the port of entry to buy brand-name goods in U.S. stores. They are allowed through the port because they have steady jobs, and thus qualify for short-term border-crossing cards. They prefer brand-name goods for the reasons we all do. They shop in the United States for the cachet, and because the prices are lower. Then they go home.

Home is the other Nogales, across the line in Sonora, a city of a hundred thousand that fills the valley and climbs the slopes on either side. The growth there is vigorous and new. In a reversal of the Arizona pattern, the rich live near the central district and the poor occupy the suburban high ground. The poor are called parachutists, as if they had floated down from the sky and dug into the steep hillsides. The reality is less exotic: they come on the bus, seeking employment; they trudge up the hills dragging suitcases, and find a spot to live near family or friends. Slowly their camps have grown together. The poorest neighborhoods are chaotic, streetless, and so dense that the eye has trouble taking them in. There is no electricity or plumbing. Steep paths wind between the shelters, which are built of scrap plywood, packing crates, car doors, salvaged tin, worn tires, and cardboard. People

suffer from malnutrition, disease, parasites. Rainstorms slicken the hillsides and scour the garbage-strewn gulches. Down in the valley the Nogales wash runs with sewage and industrial waste. The mixture flows north into Arizona, carrying sickness and poison. Last year it caught fire. For all this, some people blame the *maquiladoras*.

Maquiladoras, also called *maquilas*, are a peculiarly Mexican invention—foreign-owned factories that import all their materials from the United States, employ Mexican workers (mostly young women) to assemble them, and ship the finished merchandise back north again. Import codes in both countries allow this to happen almost duty free. The scheme was devised in the 1960s as an exception to Mexico's traditional exclusion of foreign companies; it was meant to create employment along the border while protecting Mexican industries from damaging competition. The arrangement boomed after 1982, with the collapse of the peso. Mexican labor was suddenly among the cheapest in the world; it still is.

Nearly two thousand *maquilas* operate in Mexico today, most within a few miles of the border. They do not look like much—windowless warehouses in industrial parks—but they employ half a million people and constitute a multibillion-dollar industry that has become Mexico's second largest source of foreign revenue, after oil. Definitions have blurred: as part of his reforms, Salinas has eased the laws that restricted the *maquilas'* access to the Mexican market; for want of more-conventional investors, he can use the *maquilas* to force competition on a lethargic economy. Free trade and liberalization may eventually eliminate the *maquilas*, but only in the most technical sense. To the extent that Mexico ties its future to ours, industry will continue to concentrate on the border. The *maquilas* will shed their skins but live on in similar forms. This is an unhappy prospect for people who worry about, for instance, disease and fire in the Nogales wash.

Critics in the United States have used the publicity surrounding the prospect of free trade to strengthen their attacks on the *maquiladoras*. They accuse the industry of undercutting U.S. labor, exploiting Mexican poverty, and

THE MAQUILAS DO NOT LOOK LIKE MUCH, BUT THEY CONSTITUTE A MULTIBILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY THAT HAS BECOME MEXICO'S SECOND LARGEST SOURCE OF FOREIGN REVENUE, AFTER OIL.



abusing the environment. The existence of *maquilas* raises a difficult question: we talk about progress, but if Mexico took care of its poor or cleaned up after itself, would our companies still invest there? The *maquila* managers would rather not answer this question; they are business technicians, not advocates, and they are paid to get on with the job. But they are proud that they have created employment, and some even feel they have pioneered a Mexican recovery. Most are not sophisticated thinkers. They respond to critics by excluding them, a reaction that has given the industry a reputation for secretiveness.

FRANK MCGINLEY TALKED OPENLY TO ME NONETHELESS. He is the Nogales plant manager for Coventry Manufacturing, a young Los Angeles-based company that specializes in plastic foams. McGinley lives with his wife and children in a comfortable house in Tucson, and commutes daily to his work in Mexico. At age forty he is an unassuming, thoughtful man, with a trace of the world-weariness that Americans and Europeans develop in poor countries. I met him in central Nogales on a stormy afternoon, during a gubernatorial campaign in Sonora. Ubiquitous Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) posters proclaimed ¡VAMOS POR MAS PROGRESO! McGinley smiled wryly and said, "Sure, why not?"

"You're not convinced?"

"Tell it to the people living in these shacks—yeah, let's go for more progress." He works too close to the ground to care for slogans. He said, "It's been an education in political power. They talk about the new Mexico, but where's the opposition? I've seen only one [National Action Party] poster, on the window of a shop, and now that guy's out of business."

We navigated the flooded streets to the cement-block warehouse where he runs his *maquila*. It is a small operation, employing ten men and twenty women to produce foam pads for electric car polishers, and the cloth bonnets to go with them. McGinley values efficiency: in addition to the weekly output of 6,300 pads and 30,000 bonnets, the plant produces about 1,200 industrial towels from the scraps. The men who work there are energetic teenagers, wiry street kids wearing T-shirts and



MAQUILADORA WORKERS,
JUÁREZ

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crucifixes; they form, cut, and glue the pads, and stack them on heavy pallets. The women, some of whom are older, sew the bonnets on industrial sewing machines arranged in rows under fluorescent lights. Monday through Friday, work starts at seven and ends at five, with fifteen minutes for coffee in the morning and afternoon, and a half hour for lunch. Coventry gives the workers two weeks' vacation a year, two weeks' bonus pay at Christmas, a production bonus for high volume, and a solid lunch every day. The base wage is about eight dollars a day, which is twice the standard of other *maquilas* in Nogales.

I asked McGinley why he paid such high wages, and he answered, To reduce turnover. An unstable work force is one of the greatest problems for U.S. companies in Mexico; at some of the large plants the annual turnover approaches 60 percent. Industry blames this on the immaturity of the workers, which is nonsense: in truth, their lives are insufferable, and they escape if they can. Many of the most courageous move on to the United States.

McGinley said that Coventry has a greater sense of responsibility than do other *maquilas*, but he did not claim to have rescued his employees from poverty. He mentioned their large families. When he described the misery of their dirt-floor hovels, I did not ask him to reconcile his dismay with the eight dollars a day. The problems facing even his own employees are too deep for Frank McGinley to solve, and he felt no guilt. Hardly pausing for breath, he told me about a seamstress he had hired, a malcontent who tried to organize the workers to strike for still higher wages. McGinley made a few phone calls, found she had caused trouble at other *maquilas*, agonized over it, and confronted her. She quit after the other women warned her that if she continued to agitate, she would not easily find another job. I said to McGinley, But they have the right to organize. He answered, But look what we pay already—she was trying to take advantage of us, and the others knew it.

We talked about SEDUE, the Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology. Mexico's environmental regula-

A Free-Trade Primer

HAS THE WORLD economy really become so benign that Americans can trust market forces always to produce an acceptable outcome? The United States is gambling that the answer is yes with its approach toward the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The treaty would link the economy of the United States not only with that of Mexico—the newest U.S. foreign-policy priority—but also with that of Canada.

During the Cold War, and even after a debt-induced economic collapse in the early 1980s, Mexico was at worst a headache for Washington. It sent north a few too many undocumented workers for America's restaurant kitchens to absorb. It harbored too many drug smugglers and corrupt officials who protected them. It voted against the United States in the UN a little too often and backed Central American leftists a little too enthusiastically. And the prospect of its sliding into anarchy or going communist was just likely enough to furrow brows in the U.S. foreign-policy community.

Today Mexico is seen by many Americans as simultaneously a mortal

threat and a potential saviour. It is a country big enough and close enough to reconquer the U.S. Southwest socially and linguistically, through mass emigration, and even to accelerate U.S. de-industrialization. At the same time, it may assist the United States in competing with the solidifying economic blocs in Europe and the Far East. In fact, the debate in Congress over granting the President authority to negotiate NAFTA, in the spring of last year, generated much more heat than the Persian Gulf War debate, with border-state Democrats joining Republicans to hand the President a victory.

The case for NAFTA holds that eliminating all tariffs and investment barriers between the United States and Mexico would expand commerce on both sides of the border, attract desperately needed capital into Mexico, reinforce Mexico's recent free-market reforms, and strengthen the foundations of true democracy in Mexico. A more prosperous Mexico would also be better positioned to combat the environmental horrors resulting from its breakneck industrialization. The new Mexico would send fewer illegal drug shipments and immigrants northward as well, but the gains projected for the United States would not stop there. The marriage of U.S. management and technology and low-wage Mexican workers would create the same

kind of neat division of labor seen in Japan and its Southeast Asian neighbors and envisioned for Western Europe and Eastern Europe. Some low-tech, smokestack U.S. industries and their work forces would be hurt. But the expanded markets created for U.S. goods in a booming Mexico and the increased competitiveness in world markets of North American industry as a whole would preserve and even create the kinds of good, high-wage jobs on which continued prosperity in the United States depends.

Greater North American economic integration is inevitable and for many reasons desirable. But NAFTA's viability—measured not only in economic and strategic terms but also in domestic political terms—will turn on several major issues still vigorously disputed by specialists.

First, is Mexico really developing a liberal economy just like the United States? Free trade with another economy that is rapidly embracing *laissez-faire* principles is likelier to serve both parties' interests than free trade with an economy deliberately aiming to capture market share in key industries. Mexico is plainly reducing the state's role in economic activity, but change is being carefully managed by the Mexican government. Certain industries have been designated national priorities, such as automobiles,

tions are as complete as those in the United States, and were written with the guidance of our Environmental Protection Agency. In the political heat of free trade there is a new emphasis on enforcement. McGinley described it as "permits for permits' sake." He said, "The enforcement is full of holes."

I asked, "Does money change hands?"

He denied that it happened—at least at Coventry. "We operate by the letter of the law. Most *maquilas* do. Once you start paying *la mordida* ['the bite'], it never ends." He pondered this, and continued. "Of course, sometimes you might not have a choice. I've heard they come to you and say, 'You need to buy these filters, and from this man. If you do, your plant will be in compliance.'"

I brought up the *maquilas*' reputation for environmental recklessness. He said, "There are how many plants now? Sure, some of the shops are dirty, like the chrome-platers who moved to Tecate just so they could dump into the river. But it's too easy to blame the *maquiladoras*. The problem in Mexico is ignorance." He took me to the

back room, where the pads are glued together and the molds are washed in acetone. He said, "For instance, we give these guys masks and respirators, but as soon as we turn our backs, they take them off. They get mad. They think safety equipment's not macho."

COVENTRY IS THE CREATION OF A CHARISMATIC salesman named Simon Burrow, who remains its president. When he visits Nogales, he gives short inspirational speeches in English to the assembled employees, and they applaud politely without understanding. In delicate recognition of the similarity between "Burrow" and "*burro*," they call him Señor Simon. He founded the company, in 1981, on the idea of die-cut adhesive-backed shipping pads, which he sold to glass manufacturers to separate their panes. His next idea was even better: a way of cutting foam and putting it on a plastic stick to make a high-tech swab for the computer industry. IBM came through with a huge order, and Coventry prospered, manufacturing the swabs in Los Angeles.

electronics, and pharmaceuticals, and although they are privately owned, they are managed by an elaborate system of government decrees. These regulations restrict foreign ownership, foreign investor behavior, and trade balances so as to nurture sectors in Mexico that might cease to exist if left to the mercy of the market.

Second, will Mexico be content to supply low-end, labor-intensive goods to an integrated North American market, and thus pose no threat to America's most valuable industries? This role apparently is not what Mexico has in mind. Mexican leaders declare openly—and their decrees show—that Mexico is aiming to develop high-tech, export-oriented industries. Moreover, Mexico's success with sophisticated industrial exports—now on a par with South Korea's and Taiwan's—indicates that this dream is becoming reality.

Third, will current patterns of North American trade and investment hold once barriers fall? If the United States continues to supply some three quarters of Mexico's investment and some 70 percent of its imports, then free trade will be a bonanza for U.S. companies regardless of Mexico's industrialization strategy. But Mexico's strategy does not hinge on attracting investment from the United States. Indeed, President Carlos Salinas be-

gan pushing for a free-trade agreement precisely because guaranteed duty-free access to the U.S. market would attract capital from Europe and the Far East. The greatest fear of those opposing the U.S. Administration's NAFTA plans is that Mexico will be turned into a platform for foreign companies wanting to export to the United States. These companies typically enjoy cost and other structural advantages over U.S. firms great enough to offset the low tariffs on non-North American goods which are envisioned by Washington.

NAFTA CAN serve U.S. interests, but only if Americans understand that "interdependence" and "integration" are more than buzzwords tossed around by policy analysts. In the real world these concepts inevitably have content and structure, and the United States' challenge is to achieve integration with Mexico on the best possible terms.

Most discussion so far has focused on bringing Mexican wages and environmental standards closer to U.S. levels, to exclude the possibility that Mexico will turn into a pollution haven and sweatshop for U.S. companies seeking lower production costs. Yet these steps will take years to work. Likelier to achieve quick results are rules requiring new non-North Amer-

ican investors in Mexico to export much of their output outside the new North American free-trade area—at least temporarily. In addition, U.S. policymakers could stimulate Mexican manufacturing without adding to the U.S. trade deficit or destroying U.S. jobs by replacing imports of clothing and other labor-intensive products from Asia with imports from Mexico. Mexican manufacturing and assembly of these items is also likelier to use textiles and other inputs made in the United States than are similar operations elsewhere. These steps, however, would represent a radical departure from U.S. trade policies that favor the indiscriminate dismantling of all trade barriers around the world.

From a broader perspective it is clear that Mexico looms so large in our thoughts these days at least as much because of our mounting domestic problems as because of changes in Mexico. An economically stronger United States would be better positioned to profit from Mexican industrialization. A socially healthier United States would not be generating such strong demand for Mexico's drug crops. Like many debates about foreign economic policy, the debate over NAFTA and evolving U.S.-Mexican relations is really a debate about the United States itself.

—Alan Tonelson

STRIKING STEELWORKERS, EL PASO

Three years later disaster struck when a competitor with Korean-made swabs underbid the company and won the contract. Forced to lay off most of its employees, desperate to lower its costs, Coventry moved its production to Mexicali, into an old building next to the boundary fence.

The swabs were a perfect product for Mexicali—the manufacturing was repetitious and labor-intensive. In 1987 Coventry made No. 283 on *Inc.* magazine's list of the fastest-growing private U.S. companies. Mexico was Coventry's salvation. The company found other work that could be done there. "Tedious things like packaging," McGinley said. And fishing leaders. "Have you ever wondered what poor soul had to tie those things together? It's us."

Today Coventry employs a hundred and twenty production workers in Mexicali and keeps a few technicians in Los Angeles for the more difficult special jobs. This is the sort of everybody-works arrangement that supporters of free trade dream of. They say that Mexico can be to the United States what Thailand is to Japan—a low-cost production machine in an arrangement that has strengthened the economies of both countries. Some observers disagree, believing that it is dangerous to view the Thai-Japanese relationship as a model of unfettered trade. They say Thailand has been crafted by Japan as a platform from which to export to the rest of the world. The crucial difference is this: Left to the efficiencies of unregulated trade, Mexico will be used, even by U.S. companies, mostly to export to the United States. This will widen the U.S. trade deficit and further weaken our economy. It is an argument for government intervention, resisted by the Bush Administration.

McGinley does not generalize. He described a few simple truths to me: Coventry was forced out of Los Angeles by high wages. If it had moved to Korea or the Philippines, it would have bought its supplies there. Because it moved to Mexico, it buys its supplies in the United States. That may change as Mexico develops. Coventry keeps the Los Angeles operation going because the Mexican workers can't handle the special equipment. That may change too. In the meantime, the company



is still trying to persuade them not to fix production machinery with baling wire.

C IUDAD JUÁREZ IS THE cradle of the *maquiladoras*. At a North American Philips plant the personnel director led me onto the production floor, where nine hundred young women in white T-shirts sat on stools along semi-automated assembly lines.

The personnel director was a middle-aged American, a company man with a neutral face, easily forgotten. He said, "I ask you, does this look like a sweatshop?" The hall was cool, bright, pristine.

I answered, "Impressive." With no standard by which to judge television assembly, what I meant was the presence of so many young women—white shirts, red lips, combed black hair, erect backs, quick eyes, row upon row. They perched their feet on the rungs of the stools in a dazzling display of footwear.

"Seven thousand sets a day," the man said. "Vertical integration. Sylvania, Magnavox, Philips. Top quality."

The women worked in silence, shielding their thoughts as we walked among them. Their fingers flew nimbly through the repetitive motions. The machines hissed and clanked. My host explained the details of production.

I interrupted him. "Why women?"

"Concentration and dexterity."

He was not unaffected by them. He said proudly, "The white shirts were my idea." He stopped behind one worker and, in a fatherly gesture, laid his hands on her shoulders. "Our plant beauty queen." She was about eighteen, and had delicate features coarsened by makeup. She turned to smile. We walked on. He said, "Juárez has developed a skilled labor force. The changes in just the last five years are incredible. People who think the Mexicans don't do good work are out of date. Productivity is as high here as anywhere in the world."

Well, almost. Productivity is about 80 percent as high as in the United States. But the labor costs are less than a tenth as much. (The "fully loaded" wage of the Philips workers is \$1.88 an hour, including taxes, social services, one hot meal a day, and transportation from the slums.) This combination of low wages and big results is

**THIS COMBINATION OF LOW WAGES AND
BIG RESULTS IS WHAT WORRIES THE U.S. LABOR
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what worries the U.S. labor unions. They disagree with the theory that only low-skilled jobs go to Mexico. They say free trade will add fuel to the fire.

The Mexicans are counting on it. By their most optimistic model, the border industrialization will slowly spread south, bringing development and wealth with it. Mexican companies will be invigorated by competition. The pioneering enterprises will reshape Mexico around themselves, improving the roads and telephones, training the work force, and raising the standard of living. They will bootstrap Mexico out of the Third World.

In a Juárez hotel I met an American engineer who ridiculed the idea. He was a ferretlike man, badly frustrated. He had been sent by the home office to solve yet another failure on the *maquila* production line. In Mexico "the corruption kills you," he said. "Someone is always demanding a fee. You can say it's unethical, but if you don't pay, after a while you notice that things just aren't happening. These reforms won't amount to much. The comparison to Asia is a pipe dream. Take Korea—you can go there and say, 'Copy this,' and they'll do it, and do it better and cheaper. You don't even have to go there; they come to you. Mexico?" He snorted. "Mexico lacks the midlevel management. Mexico lacks the infrastructure. Most of all, Mexico lacks the entrepreneurial spirit."

I took his doubts across town to Federico de la Vega, a patrician businessman who was instrumental in bringing the first *maquilas* to Juárez. De la Vega was an affable, thoughtful man in an open-necked shirt. We sat in a polite restaurant, where many of the patrons knew him. He said, "Nothing is certain. Mexico is built on a system of patronage that will take generations to undo. I myself am worried because the PRI won so overwhelmingly in the last regional elections—we need a strong opposition if for no other reason than to keep the party in line." He smiled reassuringly. "But don't let people convince you that nothing can change in Mexico. Juárez is the perfect example."

I asked him to explain. He said, "Forty years ago, when I came home from college in the U.S., I saw my city with fresh eyes. It was nothing but an entertainment center. I don't want to use harsher words."

"The Tijuana syndrome," I said.

"Women, liquor, quick divorces, good times for American soldiers. We fought it for decades and finally won. The irony is that El Paso is still pushing us to develop our tourism. To hell with it. One good factory will provide more jobs than the entire tourist industry."

Another wealthy Mexican I met in Juárez spoke of the future. He was in the commercial real-estate business. He said, "We have a slump now because of the U.S. recession, but I am not worried. The *maquilas* are just the beginning. Your labor unionists, your environmentalists, think they can control the process, but their power is like this." He showed me an inch between thumb and fore-

finger. "They can play politics. They can squeeze words from us. But we don't *need* the free-trade agreement to have foreign investment. We have only to invite industry, and it will come."

"That hasn't proved exactly true," I said.

"Not true? In 1979 there were seventy-five *maquilas* in Juárez, and now there are three hundred and twenty. In ten years there will be twice as many. Salinas is doing what anyone would have done. Time will show that Mexico was the great void waiting to be filled."

"If so, it's understandable that American workers are unhappy."

"Yes, of course. History has turned against them."

I APPRECIATED HIS FRANKNESS. YOU HAVE ONLY TO look at El Paso to see damage caused by economic proximity to Mexico. The city is unkempt and unhappy. Wages are depressed by the availability of cheap Mexican labor. The median family income is at least 20 percent lower than the national level, and a third of the residents live in poverty. Unemployment is 11 percent, "which is not bad for a border town," according to a spokesman for the Chamber of Commerce. If not for the Army, which has a large base there called Fort Bliss, the numbers would be worse. El Paso is pervaded with a sad boosterism. Television anchors chatter about the city's improved rank on *Money* magazine's livability list of 300 American places (El Paso has risen to eighty-sixth place, from No. 261 in 1990). A business leader said to me, "Take tourism: there's a lot we could do there. We've just got to find a way to get the drivers off the interstate."

The crumbs are for El Paso. The same logic that would take a company there takes it one step farther, across the Rio Grande. This is likely to become even more true as Mexico opens to investment. There are exceptions, of course: industrial space in El Paso is less expensive than space in Juárez, so if you are in the warehousing business, you might locate there. But the only reason you would consider the city in the first place is its closeness to Mexico. For El Paso, used to thinking of Juárez as that honky-tonk next door, the new symbiosis is bitter.

I discovered picketing steelworkers on the western edge of town. They had walked off the job at a small plant that manufactures sucker rods for oil wells, and had set up a makeshift camp across from the main gate. Seven strikers sat with me in the shade of a tarpaulin. They were picketing around the clock, on the same shifts they had worked inside. They had a small tent, a basketball hoop, and a Porta-John. I asked if they would win. One answered with a defiant V sign, and said they had already shut down the plant. Another seemed less sure. He said, "Every morning the manager drives by, and he just looks at us and laughs." He swore. They were burly men in sloppy clothes. Some had been drinking.

The man who talked most had a drooping moustache and an intense, impatient face. He introduced himself

simply as Jorge. He said, "All we're asking for is a seventy-five-cent raise—cheap bastards. I make six dollars an hour. My wife works too, but we run out of money three days before payday."

"No savings," I said.

"I forgot—there's a retirement plan. They give you a hundred dollars a year, a U.S. savings bond."

Someone said drunkenly, "That's the goddamned American way."

Jorge watched me carefully, as if I might have taken offense. He continued, "Same company in Houston, right? Guys doing our job are making ten, twelve dollars an hour."

"For how much longer, do you think?"

He looked somber.

I said, "Of course you realize in Juárez people work for six dollars a day. Your seventy-five-cent raise is what they make in an hour."

"That's what management tells us. I mean they *threaten* us with it. But El Paso is part of the United States, and we want to be part of it too. We want to live like American citizens."

FAR TO THE EAST, AFTER hundreds of miles of virtual wilderness, the border once again becomes a place punctuated by urban desperation. This is the sweltering coastal plain known as the Lower Rio Grande Valley. On the Mexican side, life is dominated by the presence of large *maquiladoras*. Reynosa, which lies on the Rio Grande, is a flat industrial city of perhaps three hundred thousand people, about seventy miles from the Gulf of Mexico. To get there from Texas, you cross the Rio Grande, passing a mile of trucks waiting to clear Mexican customs. Colonia Roma is one of the districts where the *maquila* workers live. It sprawls across a swampy lowland beyond the Pemex refinery—a large and desolate slum, strewn with trash, where vegetation does not survive. The shacks are made of scraps discarded from the factories. Children wear rags and go barefoot. Here and there a Coke sign is hammered to a wall, indicating a small grocery, a place perhaps with electric power. A paved road passes beside the neighborhood, on higher ground, and crawls with buses blowing smoke. During the shift changes at the *maquiladoras*, workers stream between the shacks and balance on planks across mud and sewage. The women dress in pressed skirts and blouses; they look like office workers from a better neighborhood in a better city. Many go into debt to achieve this effect. Life is expensive in Mexico, since inflation has outpaced wages.



The average *maquila* worker in Reynosa has to work forty-five minutes for a quart of milk or a pound of chicken, two hours for a bottle of shampoo, three and a half hours for two boxes of cornflakes or a toddler's used sweater, twenty hours for sneakers, 125 hours for a double mattress.

Drainage in Colonia Roma is poor. The district flooded the week before I got there, and residents perched with their belongings on their beds while they waited for the water to subside. This seemed hardly noteworthy to the family I went to see. They lived in a single-room plywood house that was just about taken up by two iron beds pushed together. On subsequent visits I counted eight people there; I'm sure more called it home. The oldest was a toothless Indian grandmother who questioned me about my religious beliefs. I was cautious: she wanted to

talk about God's grace and the afterlife. The youngest resident was a girl of perhaps five who seemed ill. I talked to a man in his twenties who had been working for three years at Zenith, which employs up to ten thousand workers in Reynosa. He was small, thin, and discouraged.

I asked, "How is the job?"

He answered, "Good." But his eyes were furtive.

"Good?"

"Little good. The problem is there is no money."

"And the union?"

"It can't protect us."

"How long will you stay?" I asked.

"I don't think about it."

The shack smelled of lard and garbage. Chairs hung from nails on the walls because there was no room for them on the floor. A pair of prized cowboy boots stood under one bed, by a stack of clothes. The kitchen consisted of a camp stove, a water jug, and an insulated box. There was a kerosene lantern, and a transistor radio. The buzzing of flies mixed with the shouts of children outside. Smoke from a refuse fire drifted by the open door. The yard was a mess of cinder-block rubble imbedded in mud.

Seen from a distance—say, in a photograph—such poverty evokes powerful feelings. Seen close up, however, it can seem unreal. It is bewildering that people whom you can touch, who share the same air with you, can be suffering in conditions so different from your own. I have experienced this before, in Africa, in the midst of starvation.

We carry our own world with us, and it is numbing.

ABOVE: MARÍA TORRES,
LABOR ACTIVIST, MATAMOROS

The Organizer

MARÍA GUADALUPE Torres Martínez lives in Matamoros, across the Rio Grande from Brownsville, Texas. I met her in a café to talk about her efforts to organize women workers in the *maquiladoras*. At forty-eight, Torres has a gentle face thickened by hardship. For most of her adult life she worked on the production lines in Matamoros for a company called Kemet. Now she works for an organization called Comité Fronterizo de Obreras, or Border Committee of Working Women. The committee has no membership rolls, but it is well known to thousands of *maquila* workers along the lower Rio Grande. Its approach is low-key: it does not exhort the women to march or strike but, rather, encourages them to meet discreetly in small groups in the shantytowns. They teach themselves about their rights under Mexican federal labor law, and about the dangers in the factories. Torres helps them to learn, as she herself learned. She encourages them to ask for small improvements from the *maquila* managers, and for better representation from the big Mexican unions. Faced in their offices with delegations of women who are calm and resolute, the men often give in to the demands. Torres has nourished herself with these small victories. She is a strong woman who has grown stronger with age.

Torres was born in 1944 in Cárdenas, a large town in the state of San Luis Potosí, about three hundred miles south of the border. Her father was a railroad laborer who fell off a car and died when she was a few months old. Her mother, with no means of support, went to work as a domestic for other railroad families. They could not afford to pay her, but gave her food and a place for the night. María Guadalupe grew up in their shacks, sleeping in blankets on the floor. When she was seven, she caught typhoid and almost died. She spent a year recovering. At the age of ten, having completed the third grade, she dropped out of school and went to work with her mother, cleaning houses and looking after children.

In 1960, when Torres was sixteen, she and her mother came to the United States. The Bracero guest-worker program was still in

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WORK FORTY-FIVE MINUTES FOR A QUART OF MILK OR
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to each other in upper-class households.

When they finally ventured into Brownsville, they found live-in jobs within three days. Torres became the nanny in a family of four children, for eight dollars a week. She stayed until she was twenty, saving a little money and going often to dances. Then she and her mother moved to Harlingen, the next town north, where again they found jobs in separate households. Then it was back to Brownsville. In her mid-twenties, Torres moved back to Mexico to look for work in a factory.

It took two months to get a job, at a pottery factory in Matamoros. After the first week she learned she would not be paid, because she was "training." She wondered how she was going to survive. There were twenty workers there, and they told her this was standard. She answered, "If they haven't paid you either, then you should ask for your money."

They told her not to make trouble.

When the owner arrived, she said to him, "I won't work here anymore, but you owe me for the work I've already done." She pointed to the pots she had made. "I did all this, and I'm sure you'll sell it. I won't leave until you pay me."

The owner refused.

Torres raised her voice. She used strong language, and said, "These other women have been here for months, and have never been paid for their training either. You owe them, too."

The owner hushed her, and agreed to pay. He wanted to write her a check, but she had never been to a bank, and she demanded cash. Leaving the factory, she waved the money at the other workers, and cried, "Look! Look!" She heard later that they, too, were paid.

The next factory was a clandestine operation making knitted handbags. There were twelve workers. They had no chairs or tables, but sat on newspapers on the floor. One day a union man arrived and



THE CHORIZO  
NEIGHBORHOOD, MATAMOROS



got into a shouting match with the owner, who was Italian. The union man took out a pistol and made the owner pay the workers then and there. He said, "Any who want to work in an electronics factory, come with me in my car." It was a black Buick. Torres was the first one in. The others crowded in after her, filling the car so completely that the union man barely had room to steer. Somehow he drove them to his office.

The electronics factory was an American *maquiladora*, set up by the Electronic Control Corporation to manufacture electrical coils. There were two hundred workers. Torres was given a three-month probationary contract, with a promise of permanent employment if she performed well. At the café in Matamoros she showed me what the job entailed: she folded a paper napkin and with deft and reflexive fingers simulated wrapping wire around a spool. The company required the women to produce 400 coils a day, six days a week, for about eighteen cents an hour. Despite swollen and bloody hands, Torres worked quickly, and by her second week was producing 800 coils a day. The supervisors were pleased, but after eight months they still had not given her a permanent position. Then, just before Christmas and a mandatory two-week bonus, the company fired all two hundred workers.

Torres was in trouble. Her savings were gone, and her clothes, which she had been given while working as a nanny, were wearing out. To help with the rent on her small room in central Matamoros, Torres's mother moved in, and both women took occasional day jobs in Brownsville. Every morning Torres went to the union hall. Another eight months went by. She knew already about the conditions at Kemet, the *maquiladora* where she was to work for eighteen years. She took a job there because she felt she had no choice. It was 1969, and she was twenty-five.

**K**EMET WAS AS BAD AS THEY SAID. SHE WORKED IN the department of injection molding, forming capacitor bodies from hardening epoxy. She washed the bodies bare-handed in methylene chloride, a volatile solvent that turned her hands papery and white. Methylene chloride is a chlorinated hydrocarbon, linked to liver damage, birth defects, and cancer. It is in the same chemical family as chloroform, and it can have similar soporific effects. The warning labels cautioned in English against breathing the fumes, and mentioned narcosis, respiratory failure, and death. The workers did not understand the dangers; probably their supervisors did not either.

Over the years Torres grew more angry. "I felt they were constantly loading more work on us. I began to ask the others, 'Don't *we* have any rights?' One day my friend Ludivina told me that her brother, who was a law student, had mentioned a federal labor law to her. This was the first I heard of it."

Torres had put in eleven years at Kemet. The idea of a

comprehensive labor law, its mere existence, strengthened her resistance to the supervisors. But she did not know where to find this law, or how to use it. She kept asking questions. Eventually she discovered that an American was holding meetings in a church, teaching Mexican workers about their rights. The American was Ed Krueger, then fifty, a soft-spoken man who had spent years helping the migrant farm laborers of Oklahoma and Texas. In February of 1981 Torres went to her first meeting and took fifteen Kemet women with her.

The rest of Torres's story—her success as an organizer—I knew already. I asked her about the American managers at Kemet, and their attitudes toward safety. She was reasonable. "One day they announced everyone would have to wear safety glasses. That was it—no explanation. The girls complained about having to wear something that wasn't natural to them. The glasses didn't fit, and they gave a magnification even for girls who didn't need it. The managers answered, 'Just wear them.' By then I was on the health-and-safety committee. After the first month we asked for more educational material. The managers finally brought in a movie that showed a wire in a woman's eye. It was dramatic, because the eye was bleeding. When the workers saw that, they finally accepted the safety glasses. But words alone didn't do it."

I asked her to generalize. "Do you think the managers are reckless?"

"They worry most about losing time. They don't pressure the supervisors to enforce the safety procedures, because everyone knows the procedures slow the production line. It's ridiculous, but that's how it is. The businessmen, the ones at the top, discard their noble feelings in order to be powerful."

We had been sitting in the café for most of the day. I asked Torres if she still lived in the same rented room in central Matamoros. She smiled. "It was unlivable. My mother and I had a room on the ground floor. The house was so rotten that a man upstairs fell through the floor and landed in the bed of a woman below. He was walking from one room to another. Luckily, she had just rolled over. In the rain we had to put our furniture on blocks; in hurricanes we had to leave altogether. I went to the union and the federal housing authority, but no one would help. This went on for years, and our situation kept getting worse."

In frustration she wrote a letter to the President, Miguel de la Madrid, complaining that the government did not care about the people. Three months later she got a letter back. She took it to the chief housing official, who was surprised, and asked her to wait. She did, nervously, thinking he would trick her. But the man returned and said, "For me, this is an order." He took out a map that showed new houses, and invited her to choose one. Torres by then was deeply involved in the workers'-rights movement, and she knew how to handle herself. She said, "Look, I want a good house with good plumbing.

And I don't want a lot of neighbors—I need a sense of privacy. And I want to live close to a school, so when I get old, I can at least sell gum.”

She chose a cinder-block house toward the edge of town. It had a living room, a kitchen, and two small bedrooms—just right for a middle-aged woman and her elderly mother. After the years of difficulty, the leaking roof seemed like the smallest inconvenience.

**M**ATAMOROS IS A RAW INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE. AS I drove through it one day with Torres, she said, “I see a black panorama for the Mexican worker.” She might have been talking about the environment outside the car.

I said, “But isn't this better than unemployment?”

She flared. “Americans say they save us from starvation. But all of us who have come to the north, if we had stayed where we were, we would not be dying of hunger. Here on the border we are just slaves.”

That word “*slave*” kept reappearing. Upriver I had seen graffiti scrawled defiantly across a bridge: “*¡No somos esclavos!*” “We are not slaves!” And in Colonia Roma, I had talked to a man whose greatest wish was for his children to work in the *maquiladoras*. He said, “In the past we were nothing but the slaves of the rich. And if we are still slaves today, at least the *maquiladoras* pay us more.”

I quoted him to Torres. She became calmer and said, “No one is against the plants. No one wants to close them down. We ask only for better conditions, and we are willing to compromise.” We drove in silence for a few blocks. Then she said, “But we refuse absolutely to be used as a dumping ground for industrial wastes. The President of Mexico claims he won't allow contamination. He claims environmental enforcement will be part of free trade. But why should we believe him? We've seen what they do: they close down the companies who contaminate the least, and they leave the big polluters alone.” She named them for me, and said, “There are strong interests involved. The neighborhoods around the plants have denounced them, but nothing is done.”

Torres wanted me to see for myself. I knew this much already: the border is a chemical mess. The ground, the water, and sometimes the air have been poisoned. Mis-carriage, birth-defect, and cancer rates are high. The situation is worse on the Mexican side, where dangerous wastes are dumped hap-

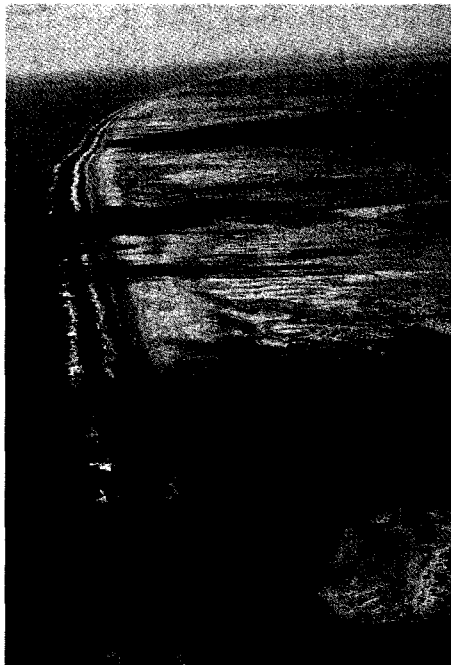
hazardly. But pollution travels, and affects the U.S. side, too.

The dumping is not necessarily intentional: at a General Motors plant in Matamoros which makes bumpers, workers are provided with tanks into which to purge their paint guns. But to save time and effort they simply purge the guns into the drains, which empty into a nearby canal. Samples of water flowing from that plant have shown staggering levels of xylenes, ethyl benzene, acetone, toluene, and methylene chloride. Similar spills occur daily at other plants all along the border. Despite treaties and promises, conditions have not improved.

In Matamoros, residential neighborhoods crowd tightly around chemical plants. Industrial accidents have sent hundreds of people to the hospital and forced thousands of others to evacuate their houses. On the night of December 6, 1990, a tank overheated and leaked a cloud of toxic vapor. The vapor entered the ventilation system of another *maquiladora*, a manufacturer of electric blankets, about three blocks away, and sent fifty women to the hospital. Slowly dissipating, it drifted over the Rio Grande into Brownsville, where the stench caused terror in the streets. The citizens of Brownsville know very well what goes on across the river. They talk about the 1984 Union Carbide pesticide leak in Bhopal, India, which within a few days killed twenty-one hundred people.

Torres took me to a neighborhood sandwiched between two chemical plants: one brewed pesticides, the other detergents. By the standards of Matamoros the neighborhood was middle-class. The houses were made of rough, unpainted wood, but they had electricity, running water, and even small yards. Most of the families had moved there in the 1930s, when cotton dust was a nuisance. The factories came later.

A chemical smell wafted through the air and burned in my throat. The day was hot, and I had a headache. A stout woman with crooked teeth, a friend of Torres's, invited us in. The woman offered me water, and I declined. I asked her if she worried about the chemicals next door. She said yes, ever since the explosion of 1983: a pipe had burst at the pesticide plant and sprayed poisonous foam over the houses. I asked her to describe it. She said, “It snowed foam. We were afraid, and ran with the children, thinking only of saving ourselves. Where we touched the foam, we got sores on our feet. The next day it rained, and the poison spread through the neighborhood. We were kept out for eight days. Our clothes were contaminated and destroyed. We had to kill our animals. Pigs,



**ABOVE: THE RIO GRANDE ENTERS THE GULF OF MEXICO**



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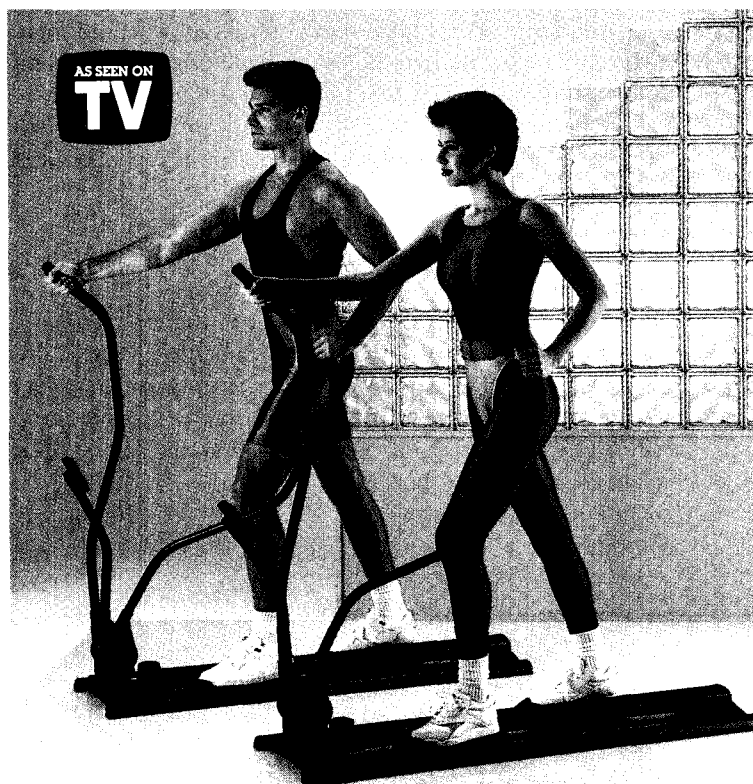
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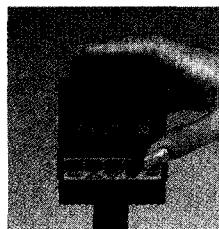
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chickens, dogs, cats. We had seven ducks. They were all buried in a trench in the company compound."

I wandered across the street and talked to an old man who told me of digging holes and smelling chemicals in the groundwater a few feet below the surface. The detergent factory had built evaporation ponds next to his house. When they overflowed, his chickens picked at the water and died.

Later, Torres took me for a walk along a ditch where discharges from neighboring factories sink into the ground. The water was black, and it turned milky when I tossed rocks into it. I did not want to touch it, or even get close. Families live there along the railroad tracks, in a district called Chorizo because it is long and narrow, like a sausage. They drink from tainted wells, and hang their clothes to dry on the fences that separate them from industry. The border is full of these fences without effect.

### Paradise

**B**ROWNSVILLE IS THE easternmost city on the U.S.-Mexican border. Downstream the Rio Grande flows sluggishly thirty miles to the Gulf of Mexico. Burdened with sewage and industrial runoff, it meanders across a coastal

flat. There are a few *colonias*, which on the U.S. side means the poorest developments, where people buy plots on installment and put in shacks and trailer houses without plumbing. Elsewhere the land is unwanted and mostly unused. The bay to the north hems it in, making this lowest stretch of river unattractive to immigrants and smugglers. A paved road dwindles as it approaches the coast at a beach called Boca Chica. To the north, across the bay, the condominiums of Padre Island rise against the horizon. Developers have dreamed of a Boca Chica resort, too, but Padre Island itself is overbuilt. The beach at Boca Chica is narrow and littered. The Rio Grande empties into the surf about a mile to the south. Where the pavement turns to sand, the state has erected a STOP sign. Twelve miles offshore, the border officially ends.

But the real end of the border is a fenced compound back in Brownsville. It lies on the eastern edge of town, by the airport, and looks like a grammar school: a cluster of low buildings and verandas, people, some grass and trees. It is a refugee camp for Central Americans, run by the Catholic diocese, and named Casa Oscar Romero,



ABOVE: IN TEXAS, A SIGN FACING SOUTH

after the Salvadoran archbishop who was assassinated in 1980. The camp ac-

commodates two hundred people. Having swum the Rio Grande and evaded the Border Patrol, Central Americans can rest safely there for a week or two. The Border Patrol cruises by but does not enter the grounds.

There are as many women as men. Some use the time to file for political asylum; while their requests are being processed, they cannot be deported. Others simply eat and sleep before hiding again and traveling north. They hear about the camp from fellow travelers, or from taxi drivers in Brownsville. This is peculiar: though the Border Patrol cannot find them in the bushes, apparently the taxi drivers can. Throughout the day I spent at the camp, taxis pulled up and discharged people, sometimes entire families. The drivers went the other way, too: a Honduran hired a cab to take him back to the river, to find his sisters, whom he had left hiding. I do not know what be-

came of them; the border is a dangerous place for undocumented immigrants, and hours later the Hondurans had not returned.

I talked to a Guatemalan who had been to the United States five years before but had gotten drunk and been arrested and deported. Back in Guatemala he returned to his village and his family of eight sisters and a brother. When his father was shot by the army, he decided to go north

again to find another sister, who had married and was living in Miami. It took him three weeks to come through Mexico. Crossing the Rio Grande at Laredo he was caught and thrown back four times. He avoided repatriation to Guatemala by claiming to be a Mexican. On the fifth attempt, here at Brownsville, he slipped by the Border Patrol. I asked him how he planned to get to Miami. He was not sure. I asked him how he would find his sister, and he admitted that he did not know her address or her married name. The camp was full of similar problems: a brother somewhere in Chicago, a cousin last heard of in Houston, obsolete addresses, disconnected telephones, people lost in the mass of human migration.

The white-haired nun in the camp office was a Spaniard, and she was angry. She said, "You preach that here in the U.S. is paradise, and people believe you." A business jet, no doubt on a mission for the *maquilas*, screamed overhead. She said, "The big companies, they are miserable people with unlimited ambition. The suffering you see around you is the result of their greed. The border is a sore—the sickness is within us."

She was an ideologue, and she packaged the world too simply. But she was right about this: The border is a reflection of us all. □

# Can An Intelligent Person Be Religious?



Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

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## Italy's Heartland

*Feeling protected and happy in the storybook hills of the Marche*

by Corby Kummer

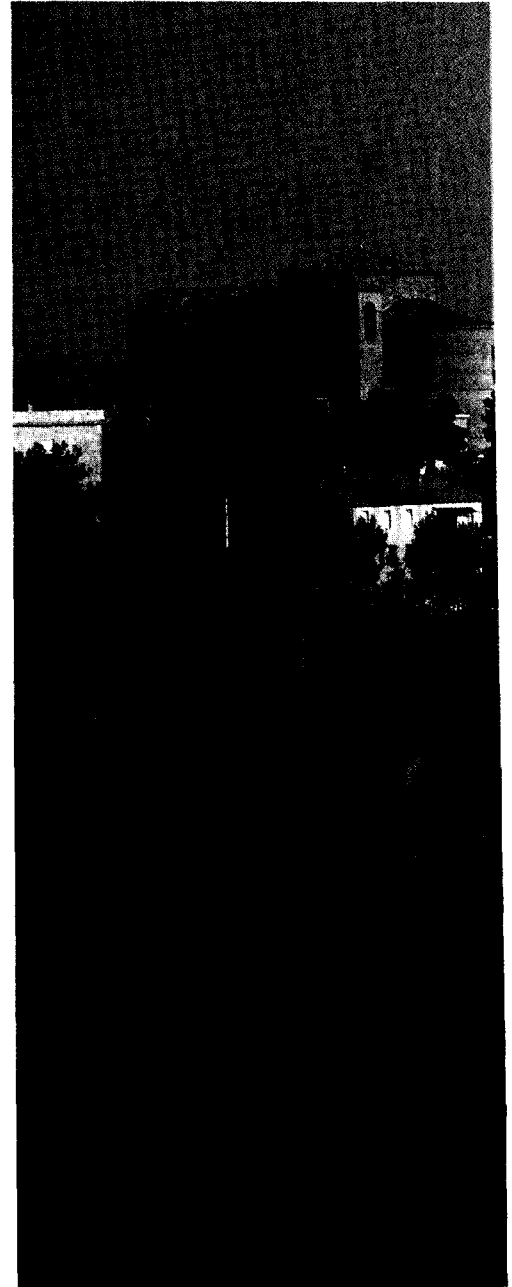
THE LANDSCAPE of the Marche, a region of Italy east of Tuscany and south of Venice, is the warmest I know. For miles, roads wind up and down gentle hills blanketed with fields of wheat, corn, and sunflowers, which are interrupted by great stands of oak, so prized that the law protects them. Around nearly every bend is a fortified hill town whose sinuous, crenelated walls grow as if organically from the hillside. Everything—walls, roads, churches, houses, town halls, theaters, and the many fortresses, which despite their original purpose seem designed for a child's pleasure—is of the local brick, whose color ranges from wheat to honey to dusty pink. The vaunted landscape of Tuscany, with its dun-colored castles jutting from spiky hills and its rows of cypresses like exclamation points, seems frenetic by comparison. The Marche enfold you.

If you don't know the Marche, you're not alone. Most Italians don't either. My food-aware friends had heard that the pasta there was the best in Italy, and that the olive oil, prosciutto, and sausage competed for the same title; they heard right. The region's wines are well known even if their source isn't—especially verdicchio, the lightly

astrigent white wine that was long a watery cliché in checkered-tablecloth restaurants but that has recently been greatly improved by forward-thinking winemakers.

The culturally aware know that a pilgrimage is mandatory to the ducal palace of Urbino, whose court life, the subject of Castiglione's *The Courtier*, was one of the pinnacles of Renaissance civilization. Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation*, a disturbing, transfixing picture that hangs in the palace, is often the climax of a Piero trail that begins in Tuscany and continues across the Apennines to Urbino. There the trail usually ends, although lovers of the Renaissance keep going south, pursuing the work of Lorenzo Lotto and Carlo and Vittore Crivelli, painters who long worked in the Marche; this tour finishes at Ascoli Piceno, one of the best-preserved Renaissance city centers in Italy. Ascoli Piceno, on the region's southern border, is a four-hour drive from Rome, and Urbino is four hours from Florence or anyplace else you're likely to be. You have to plan to go.

If Italians do, it is for a holiday along the Adriatic, usually as part of a package tour. That is not the way to see the Marche. Boxy hotels crowd the resort towns, and the coast is lined by railroad tracks built at the turn of the century—you must cross them to get to the beach. If you know the right stretches,



you can spend a very pleasant few days by the sea. But it seems silly to lie in the sun for long when just a few miles inland is that landscape.

The Marchigiani, as the region's inhabitants are called, don't mind being forgotten, and even prefer their relative isolation. Their motto has long been "*Non fare il passo più lungo della gamba*," or "Don't take a step longer than your leg." Today light industry, carefully started out of agricultural profits and expanded one small step at a time, flourishes throughout the region, and famous clothing designers in the big cities rely on the standards of craftsmanship upheld in the Marche. Suc-

*Above and right: Corinaldo, with walls by Francesco di Giorgio Martini*





THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: TOURING CLUB ITALIANO / MARIO CRESCI

cessful small industrialists typically see to it, however, that at least one member of every generation keeps farming.

This trust in the land—the Marches have been a breadbasket since Roman times—helps explain the people's devotion to the region and their steady, open character. If you have to stop for directions, and you will, the person you ask will lean right into your car window for a chat. Don't worry if you don't speak Italian; sign language and a few words will get you far. Do learn the phrase "*deve fare il giro*," meaning "you have to go around." Those lovely walled towns have just one entrance, and you usually ask just after passing it.

THE BEST way to see the region is to stay in its heart, the provincial center of Jesi, where you are in the thick of castles and rolling hills. The most inviting towns and cities are rarely much farther than an hour's drive from Jesi, which, Jonathan Keates says in *Italian Journeys*, a beautifully if showily written book published last year in England, "distills the Italian hill-town to its quintessence without whimsy or pretence for the benefit of tourists."

Jesi and its surrounding hill towns run along the Esino valley, one of four horizontal bands into which the Marches are divided, roughly corresponding

to the region's four provinces. The name of the region was first used in the tenth century, by Frankish rulers who had invaded from the north; *marche* is a word of Germanic origin that means "borderland" (Italians pronounce it *mar-kay*). Even after the Franks ceded the region to the popes, border disputes were a way of life, and most villages and cities were fortified. The Marches largely remained papal states until the unification of Italy, in the 1860s; during the Renaissance several powerful warrior families, sometimes allied with the popes and sometimes not, ruled the region and built many of its grandest monuments. The warlords

were great patrons, too, and the greatest was Duke Federico da Montefeltro, who created the court of Urbino.

The defining genius of the Marche was Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1502), a Sienese military architect who came to Urbino and worked all through the Marche. Francesco di Giorgio's designs contain virtually no right angles and are of fanciful shapes: the site dictated the form, and so no wall, no tower, is like any other. One fort, at Sassocorvaro, is shaped like a tortoise. The octagonal fortress at Mondavio is now an entertaining museum with hokey wax figures; the guides, most of them teenage boys, delight in pointing out secret entrances, dungeons, hidden lookouts, how the curve of the walls repelled cannonballs, the advanced ventilation system, and a deceptive wall through which soldiers could break to escape if the fortress was invaded.

Driving to the towns where you can view work by Francesco di Giorgio and his followers (you will become surprisingly attentive to crenelated walls) is as worthwhile as strolling through them, especially the approach to Cingoli, called "the balcony of the Marche" for its commanding site. Once you are inside their walls, wholesome towns like Corinaldo, Treia, and Staffolo make you feel embraced. The most lost in time is Loretello, a miniature fortified town with a tiny tower, perfectly scaled-down walls, and just a handful of houses.

Twice I happened on local festivals where I was simply given plates of food—once near Serra de' Conti (more great walls), where I had *crescia*, a rich flatbread cooked on a griddle, with sweet, home-cured prosciutto, a regional specialty, and once near Matelica, where a winemaking cooperative handed out plates of fresh fried fish. Even if you're not given something to eat, you'll see vignettes of everyday life—for example, men in a barber shop in Pergola being shaved and trading gossip behind one of the region's many art-nouveau storefronts, the door wide open.

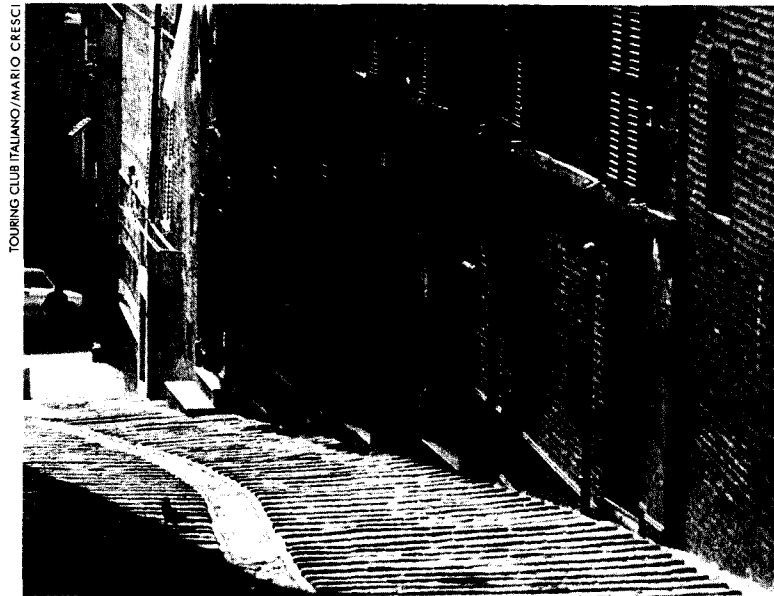
The hotel most convenient to these towns, the Federico II, just outside Jesi, isn't the kind I usually seek—it is a new, lavish, high-rise businessmen's hotel—but it has attentive, efficient service and a big indoor pool, and is very close to the highway. This last is important, because the many hills mean that driving times can be longer than they look on the map.

San Lorenzo in Campo, in the valley

it at his wine shop in Jesi, which has a wide selection of the region's wines). Biagioli's mother, Efresina Rosichini, makes the unbelievably light pasta, and puts sheets of it in, for example, a *lasagne* with pureed local greens and béchamel sauce, and she makes exceptional ice creams, especially an intensely flavored hazelnut I still dream of. Il Giardino is also a hotel, which is not on a par with the restaurant: the twenty

rooms are good value but small and plain.

From Jesi it is an easy drive up the coast to Pesaro, the region's most worldly city, which provides a *colpo di mondanità*—a "shot of sophistication." Pesaro has the feel of an elegant northern city like Parma or Bologna. Because it is also a resort, it offers two equally diverting *passeggiate*, the strolls that Italians take en masse before and after dinner: through the Renaissance center, with the most fashionable shopping in the region; and along the Adriatic, where you can see villas in the



The local brick in the streets of Macerata (above) and Corinaldo (below)

near Loretello, must be visited for Il Giardino, one of the best restaurants in Italy. Massimo Biagioli, the cheerfully arrogant owner, who bears a resemblance to Alain Delon, stocks the region's notable olive oils and wines. You can try the oils of Fattoria Petrini, among the smoothest and most flavorful in the country (San Vito, a *cru* made of the olives of just one hillside, is available from Dean & DeLuca, at 800-221-7714), poured on a nutty whole-wheat bread made in the village. You can order a course around the winemaker Giorgio Brunori's San Nicolò, a *verdicchio* in a class above all others, of very limited production (Brunori sells

art-nouveau style, called "Liberty" in Italy. One, the Villetta Ruggeri, is an extravaganza of wild ornament, with terra-cotta lobsters holding up the cornice. The Museo Civico, in the center, has a celebrated altarpiece by the Venetian Giovanni Bellini and an extensive collection of the hand-painted *maiolica* made around Urbino in the late Renaissance, whose blue-and-yellow decoration is much in favor now.

Music is a central part of life in the Marche. Gioacchino Rossini, the composer, was born in Pesaro, and the annual Rossini festival takes place there, this year from July 31 to August 18. In celebration of the bicentennial of Rossini's birth, a series of exhibitions in and around Pesaro will continue through the fall. Nearly every town has its own opera house. In the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century families built them cooperatively, each paying for its own box. These theaters turn up in the most unlikely places: in beach towns, in the fortress at Sassocorvaro, and in the tiny hill towns near Jesi. Jesi itself has the grandest, the





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Teatro Pergolesi (its namesake, the composer, was born in Jesi), which is often used and is open for tours. The biggest is the Sferisterio, an enormous semi-oval coliseum built in the 1820s in Macerata, an animated university hill town south of Jesi, which stages an opera festival each July.

Many of the famous musicians who come to Pesaro's Rossini festival stay at Villa Serena, in the hills on the outskirts of town. The Villa Serena, converted to an inn in the fifties, is more like a true aristocratic house than are carefully and recently restored villas, because it is haphazard. There are valuable chandeliers, *maiolica* plates on the walls, and good sixteenth-century furniture alongside tag-sale dressers, 1940s nightstands, and cheap pressed-glass vases; the plumbing in the large bathrooms might be from any decade in this century; everything, old and new, is worn and frequently dusty. The gardens are large, formal, and unkempt, with walls and gates leading to secret-garden-like beds for vegetables and flowers. The Villa Serena reminded me of the romantic, secluded small hotel of the Rodgers and Hart song (there's even a wishing well), where "Perhaps you'd like to play the organ / They tune it ev'ry other fall."

IF MARCHIGIANI want a day at the beach, they go to the one part of the coast not hemmed in by railroad tracks, and also the most dramatic—the Conero Riviera, named for the mountain that broods over the whole region. The beaches are of pebble, rather than the sand of the rest of the coast, and thick cypress groves go straight up the foothills of the Conero, making the area look like the French Riviera. The pretty towns of Numana and Sirolo, on hills above the beaches, have retained their character even while becoming resorts. The area is just an hour's drive from Jesi, but if you prefer to stay at the beach you can go to the town of Portonovo for either of two good hotels: the Fortino Napoleonico, a nine-

teenth-century stone fort converted to a hotel, which has a private beach, or the Emilia, on the hill above the town, a modern hotel with tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a restaurant famous for its excellent fish.

To my mind, the best reason to visit the coast is to eat well and then head southward on the main highway for Ascoli Piceno. Whichever restaurants you try, you should search out an extraordi-

careless rebuilding.) The owner, Lamberto Ridolfi, is dedicated to preserving the best of the region, and his mother, Amalia Ceccarelli, knows how to cook it (more Italian restaurants seem to be mom-and-son than mom-and-pop operations). Ridolfi always offers some kind of *maccheroncini di Campofilone*, a cult pasta that is still made by hand in Campofilone, a small town just in from the coast. The dough contains only

eggs and flour—no water, salt, or oil—and the hand-cut angel-hair strands almost completely absorb whatever sauce they are paired with. I was served maccheroncini with a simple sauce of diced zucchini and orange zucchini blossoms, and the dish was exactly right.

Farther down the coast begins serious competition in making the region's best *brodetto*, an aromatic fish stew served over toasted bread. Some cooks add hot pepper, vegetables, and vinegar; others use just tomatoes, garlic, oregano, and parsley; some insist on fish

only, others add shellfish; all think theirs the only right recipe. With *brodetto* you drink *verdicchio*, preferably one of the superior versions made by Villa Bucci (which has helped lift the international image of *verdicchio*) or Umani Ronchi.

The region's signature pasta dish is *vincisgrassi*, a lasagne whose odd name is usually said to derive from Prince Alfred Windisch-Graetz, the Austrian general who governed Ancona in the mid-nineteenth century. Luciano Scafa, the proprietor of the Ristorante Davide, in the fashionable resort of Porto San Giorgio, and an amateur historian, refutes this. He has found much earlier recipes for the same dish called *princisgras*, or "princely fat," for its expensive richness (prosciutto, chopped meats, truffles). Today the main recipes vary according to whether they include or omit béchamel sauce with the long-cooked meat *ragu*; béchamel, in the view of some, carries too much of a taint of Emilia-Romagna, an adjacent region that is famous for its lasagne. No matter. The homemade pasta in the

JOHN FERRO SIMS

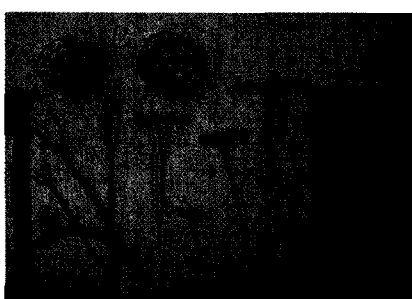


Olive trees (above) and the folk-arts museum in Sassorcorvaro (below)

nary red wine made a few miles from Portonovo: Cùmaro, which in 1988, three years after its first release, won a top prize in an important worldwide competition. Cùmaro is a Rosso Conero, made of montepulciano grapes grown by the winemaker Umani Ronchi in a seven-acre vineyard. It is as lush and powerful as any Bordeaux.

The best restaurant on the coast, the Villa Amalia, also has modern and pleasant rooms, although the town it's in, Falconara Maritima—near Ancona, the region's capital and principal port—has little to recommend it besides proximity to the airport. (Ancona itself was ruined by wartime bombing and

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Marches rivals and often betters that of its neighbor.

Ascoli Piceno, not far south of Porto San Giorgio, is one of the country's great walking cities, dotted with the kind of square, blunt-topped towers familiar from the Tuscan town of San Gimignano, and its Piazza del Popolo, paved in travertine, is one of the great squares-cum-salons. On one side of the piazza rise the thin ribs of the octagonal Gothic apses of San Francesco, stark and beautiful, and on the others are handsome medieval and Renaissance façades. The back streets are an intact fabric of late medieval and Renaissance houses, still lived in and uninterrupted by shops.

Museums everywhere in the Marches are as interesting for their oddball contents as for their paintings. The museum at Cingoli, for instance, displays the spiked wooden cuffs and leather balls used for *gioco del pallone*, a Renaissance game (you hit back the ball with a cuff, worn on the left hand; the guide let me try one on) that local citizens re-create in costume on the last Sunday of June. In several crowded rooms of the Palazzo Colocci, a house museum hidden in the center of Jesi, you can examine a handwritten menu from a surprisingly lavish dinner in 1944 or an eighteenth-century candlelit clock. A museum at Castelfidardo is dedicated to the accordion, because the town was and remains a center of its manufacture. At Tolentino there is an "international" museum of caricature, in Cupramontona an international museum of wine labels, in Macerata a collection of crèches. My favorite Marches museum is in Fabriano, a town known for its sausage and salami and its paper factories. At the paper and watermark museum there you can watch workers make rag paper, fishing out from large copper-lined tubs metal screens supporting wet, thick sheets of paper with enchanting filigree watermarks. You can buy dried sheets and admire them in the light.

As elsewhere in Italy, my touchstones are Faith Heller Willinger's *Eating in Italy*, which also lists hotels, museums, and sources of local crafts, and Burton Anderson's *Wine Atlas of Italy*. Of the general guides, I found the Cadogan guide and *The Real Guide* the most useful, and the Hachette the most complete. All you really need, though, is a car and a map and a week. □



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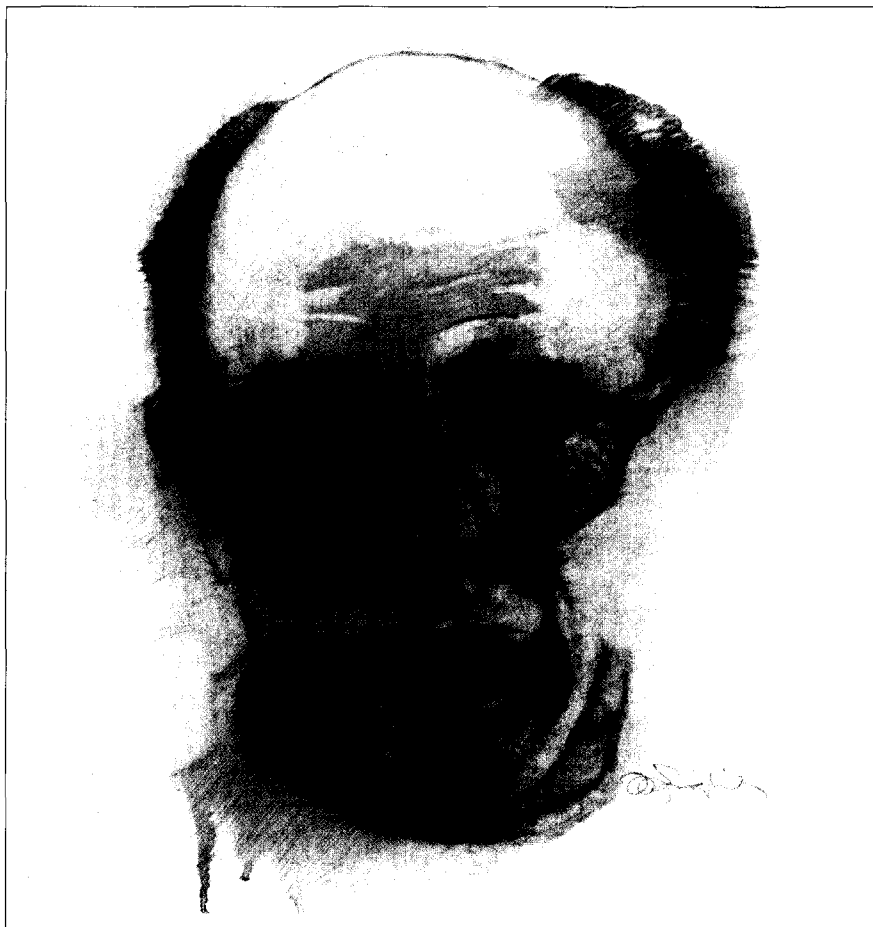
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## Classicism Without Irony

*Harold Shapero set his musical gifts free by sincerely imitating the masters*

by William H. Youngren

A LONG-NEGLECTED masterpiece of twentieth-century American music has recently been returned to active concert life. Harold Shapero's *Symphony for Classical Orchestra* was composed in 1947, first performed by the Boston Symphony under Leonard Bernstein the following year, and recorded for Columbia by Bernstein in 1953. Yet André Previn, who is much attracted to and very knowledgeable about the American music of the 1940s, had never even heard of its existence until 1986.

"I was looking for American pieces

to perform," Previn told me recently, "and I found that someone named Shapero had written a symphony fifty minutes long! So I asked the librarian [of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which Previn was then conducting] to get the score for me. When it came, it was practically illegible, but I could see that this was a great piece—especially the second movement." Previn's subsequent concert performances of the work with the Los Angeles Philharmonic were a great success, and a recording derived from some of them was issued in 1988 on compact disc

(New World Records NW 373). Previn has performed the work in New York and Boston as well as in Los Angeles, and he was scheduled to perform it in Chicago this past season but was forced by an injury to turn over the performance to the New York City Opera's Christopher Keene. This season Previn will perform Shapero's symphony in London, but after that will leave the work to his colleagues, who, he is confident, will take it up and make it a repertory work. "You have to watch it that you don't get typecast," he told me. "That happened to me with the Walton Second Symphony. I have to watch it that everywhere they don't ask me to do the Shapero piece."

As one who has known and loved Shapero's symphony for almost forty years, I was delighted to learn that this particular problem was what worried Previn. As his experience attests, the work had long ago vanished from sight. The last significant mention of it in print was in Wilfrid Mellers's 1965 survey of American music, *Music in a New Found Land*. Mellers called attention to what he saw as Shapero's "attempt to use Beethoven as (in Stravinsky's sense) a mask," an attempt he judged to have been misguided. "Beethoven's essence," he wrote, "is a revelation of identity rather than a manifestation of tradition. Identity can never be emulated, only superseded." Mellers added, "Shapero's refusal to stand on his own feet was an abdication; and it is hardly surprising that, since assuming the mask of Beethoven, he has written less and less."

It is sadly true that some years earlier Shapero had virtually stopped composing. Indeed, Previn told me that when he phoned to discuss performing the symphony, Shapero was so astonished that he thought there must be some mistake. But if you were around Boston in the mid-1950s, and if you had an interest in the special problems of twentieth-century music, you could scarcely miss the *Symphony for Classical Orchestra*. The Bernstein recording was newly issued, and Shapero was then, as he has remained ever since, an important figure on the Boston music scene.

Born in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1920, Harold Shapero began his career in music as a jazz pianist and arranger. Before he was out of his teens, he was studying composition with Nicolas Slonimsky and Ernst Krenek. At Harvard he was a



student of Walter Piston and, like so many Piston students, he gravitated to the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, where he studied with Paul Hindemith. He also did work at the Longy School, in Cambridge, with the renowned Nadia Boulanger, who spent the war years in this country. Soon Shapero became closely associated with Bernstein, Arthur Berger, and Irving Fine (who had also been students of Piston's), and when Brandeis University was founded, in the Boston suburb of Waltham in 1948, the four of them formed the core of its music department. Until he retired, four years ago, Shapero was a provocative and inspiring teacher to generations of Brandeis students.

During the 1940s Shapero's music attracted a good deal of attention. He was awarded Naumburg, Guggenheim, and Fulbright fellowships, and in a 1948 *New York Times Magazine* article about young American composers Aaron Copland singled out Shapero as "at the same time the most gifted and the most baffling composer of his generation," blessed with "a phenomenal 'ear' and a brilliant (though sometimes erratic) mind," and with "absolutely perfected technical equipment" that he was able to "put at the service of a wonderfully spontaneous musical gift." What baffled Copland was Shapero's seeming "compulsion to fashion his music after some great model," a compulsion that Copland attributed to a temporary "hero-worship complex" or perhaps "a freakish attack of false modesty." Copland looked forward to the day when Shapero would "strike out unconcernedly on his own."

The curious idea that the true artist must abjure all past models and heroically—even, apparently, "unconcernedly"—strike out on his own is of fairly recent origin. Though this idea has, for obvious reasons, had a special appeal to American artists, one is surprised to find it being so forcefully expressed by Copland, who was also a former student of Boulanger's, in the America of the 1940s, where the influence of Stravinsky's neoclassical works, often as transmitted through Boulanger's teaching, was extremely strong.

In 1946 Shapero had published, in the magazine *Modern Music*, an essay called "The Musical Mind," in which he advanced a very different, and far more traditional, view of how the com-

poser ought to function. Acknowledging that it was now "more difficult than ever before for the creative musician to absorb, select and integrate the materials which will make up his art," Shapero proposed the following solution: "If he re-examines the fundamental nature of musical syntax, which actually involves the effort of understanding in the most profound way the manner in which the creative mind works, he cannot fail to gain a true insight into his artistic powers." Since Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were the composers who "possessed the greatest mastery of musical phraseology," it was to them that Shapero recommended the twentieth-century composer turn.

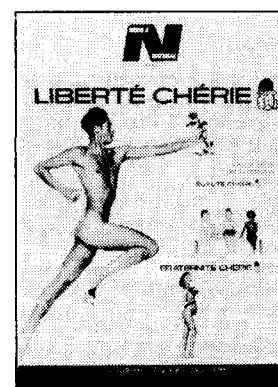
Far from discouraging or inhibiting creativity or personal expression, the kind of imitative regimen Shapero proposed seemed to him the most sensible and efficient means for the composer to discover who, musically, he was and how to set his gifts free:

Just as the function of daily ritual and prayer, as related to the intuitive realization of deity, is that of preserving the thread of connected thoughts which lead to the intuition itself, so the function of daily technical practice, as related to musical composition, is that of maintaining free the inroad to that corner of the mind from which the music comes.

As the composer continues to work exercises in imitation of his models he will be surprised to find that along with the thousand subtleties of technique he will absorb from his masters, he will discover the personal materials of his own art.

As for the then-fashionable precompositional systems of Schoenberg and Hindemith, with which Shapero had had firsthand experience through his work with Krenk and with Hindemith, he concluded that their proponents had "encountered so many difficulties in reconciling their systems with those of the past that we may assume that they have come into conflict with the natural functions of the musical mind."

ONE COULD not ask for a view further from that of Copland and Mellers. At a time when there was almost as much concern about the great American symphony as there was about the great American novel, Shapero was firmly focused on the composer's relation to tradition. The subject of his Harvard senior honors thesis was



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twentieth-century neoclassicism, and in the course of his studies with Piston, Shapero had written a woodwind trio, one movement of which was markedly neoclassical. Later, at Tanglewood, Hindemith admired that movement's second theme and told Shapero that it represented the source to which he must return in order to discover his musical identity. Also, Shapero made a close study with Boulanger of the late Beethoven quartets. "I was snowed by them," he told me recently. "I heard little corners in Beethoven that sounded to me very modern and strange—harmonic procedures, odd things. And I connected the whole thing up into this package"—the Symphony for Classical Orchestra.

It is thus no surprise that Shapero's symphony is quite different from those other symphonies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which were written more or less in imitation of classical models—particularly Bizet's Symphony in C, Prokofiev's Classical Symphony, and Stravinsky's Symphony in C. In the first place, these are all only about half as long as the Symphony for Classical Orchestra, which if not quite Previn's fifty minutes is at least forty to forty-five minutes in length. More important, they all evoke the classical period with a sort of affectionate irony, not only as a time when symphonies were shorter but also as a time when music was more straightforwardly and joyously expressive than in our post-*Tristan* (let alone post-Schoenberg) age—a time when life in general was perhaps simpler and more enjoyable. Orderly eighteenth-century tunes and harmonic progressions are repeatedly given surprising chromatic twists, suddenly reminding the listener that this is, after all, a twentieth-century work. Much as in a great mock-heroic poem like Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, these symphonies wittily juxtapose old and new, bringing the differences between them into sharp relief. The classical style is deployed in a manner that may be termed, in a wholly nondeprecatory sense, superficial: directed at producing a brilliant, dazzling surface.

In Shapero's symphony, however, the classical style is used not superficially or decoratively but deeply and abstractly, to provide the work's foundation and to create its very fabric. The style is felt in the carefully built climaxes, the long dominant preparations, the spacing of

the harmonies—in everything that has to do with the mechanics of tonal manipulation and pacing. Though the influence of Beethoven, along with that of Haydn, is felt throughout, the work does not really sound like Beethoven. For example, though the opulent second movement—which first impressed Previn, as it does most listeners—has plenty of Beethovenian muscle, it actually sounds more like Stravinsky filtered through Copland. "I'm tired of hearing about the Beethoven connection," Previn remarked to me. "Everybody acts as though they'd discovered a big thing when they find that. There's so much else in the piece—so much fine original music!" And this holds not just for the second movement but also for the rest of the work: the powerful opening movement, with its impressive slow introduction; the jocular, expansive scherzo; the dashing finale. Classical and modern idioms are not simply juxtaposed. Rather, they interpenetrate, creating a novel fusion that has great seriousness and beauty.

Whatever it was that kept Shapero from composing for several decades, it was not the fact that the twentieth-century composer's relation to musical tradition occupied—as it continues to occupy—so central a place in his sensibility. It is pleasant to learn that the recent success of the Symphony for Classical Orchestra has set him to composing once more. Besides two works he never finished—a concerto for orchestra and a ballet originally commissioned by Balanchine—he is working on two new commissions, a chamber symphony for Gerard Schwarz and a trumpet concerto for Doc Severinsen.

In the meantime, one hopes that Bernstein's performance of the Symphony for Classical Orchestra, which is much sloppier technically than Previn's but has great drive and flair, will be reissued, and that other fine Shapero works—for example, his 1941 Sonata for Piano Four Hands and *On Green Mountain*, a jazzy 1957 takeoff on Monteverdi's "*Zefiro torna*"—will be reissued or newly recorded and will gain the audience they deserve. (The charming Nine-Minute Overture, composed in 1940, is on the compact disc with the Symphony for Classical Orchestra.) There has been too much talk about the music Harold Shapero didn't write; it is time to appreciate the music that he did—and will—write. □

# Books

## A Case for Reform

by James Fallows

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT:  
How the Entrepreneurial  
Spirit Is Transforming the Public  
Sector, From Schoolhouse to  
Statehouse, City Hall to  
the Pentagon  
by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler.  
Addison Wesley, \$22.95.

THIS BOOK may turn out to be enormously influential. Ten years ago every businessman in America seemed to be reading *In Search of Excellence*, by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman. I doubt that *Reinventing Government* will enjoy the same runaway commercial success; its intended audience—politicians and government managers—is not quite as large or as well funded as Peters and Waterman's was. But in spirit, approach, and general élan, the two projects are quite similar. *In Search of Excellence* examined the most successful U.S. corporations to find out what traits they shared, especially traits of corporate culture. *Reinventing Government* examines state and local governments, plus a few federal bureaucracies, to find out what constitutes governmental success and to see how the lessons of success could be applied where governments now fail.

David Osborne (who has written occasionally for *The Atlantic*) has spent much of the past decade studying state and local governments. His previous book, *Laboratories of Democracy*, which described innovation at the state level, was a warm-up for this one. Ted Gaebler has been a city manager in several places, most recently Visalia, California. The two maintain a studiously nonparti-

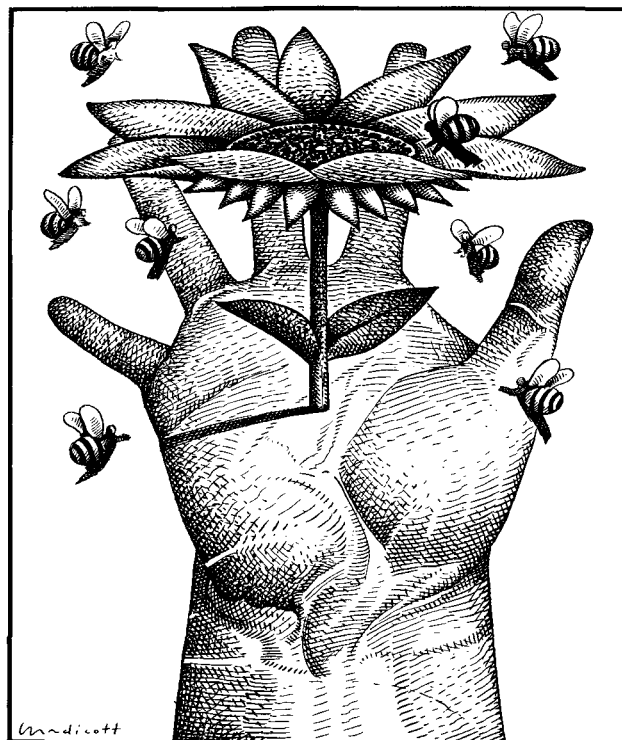
san pose, and the book's jacket has a carefully balanced set of blurbs from Republican and Democratic officials. William Weld, the Republican governor of Massachusetts, says that the book will be "required reading in the Weld administration." Bill Clinton says more expansively that it "should be read by every elected official in America." Osborne has been a campaign adviser to Clinton in this year's presidential race, and at one stage he served as a surrogate for Clinton. (In January, when Gennifer Flowers made her allegations concerning Clinton, Osborne was pitted against the New York gossip columnist Cindy Adams on the television show *Larry King Live*. It was up to that point the most bizarre pairing of the campaign, as the tweedy, staid-seeming Osborne had to discuss the nuances of the "love nest" with a woman who exclaimed that the allegations might be good for Clinton because being a "great lover" is "part of the presidential résumé.")

If Clinton—or, for that matter, Weld—should become President, the Osborne-Gaebler message would have obvious importance. Even without top-down

support, it has already attracted a cult-like following in state and local governments. Moreover, the impact of the book's argument is almost completely positive. If governments throughout the country ran the way this book suggests, the United States would be a happier and better-governed place. Considered as an instrument of political reform, therefore, *Reinventing Government* deserves attention and praise—even though considered strictly as a book it leaves me quite critical and wary.

OSBORNE AND Gaebler's initial achievement is to stand on an unfamiliar side of a great political divide. This is the divide that separates theory from practice, politics from governance. It is the gap between the government's intentions, as reflected in speeches and six-point plans, and its effect, as reflected in what agencies and bureaucrats do all day. Virtually all of American journalism is focused on the intentions side of this divide—on the struggle to pass a bill, win an election, confirm a nominee. When we read about the effect side, it's usually because of an outright scandal, such as the S&L collapse. Journalists are uncomfortable trying to make subjective judgments about whether a program has worked well or poorly, and they often find the whole subject of implementation boring.

The division between intentions and effect creates a class division among politicians. Senators can remain almost completely on the intentions side. They tell us their plans for solving this or that problem, which usually means the legislation they would support, but they are rarely responsible for carrying plans out. Governors of very large states—in practice, only New York and California—can get honorary membership in the intentions club and be excused from talking much about





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### What are the facts?

■ Despite decisive military defeats in the wars that they have launched against the Jewish state since the very day of its birth, the Arabs, in an almost unbelievable act of mental acrobatics, deny the existence of the country that has inflicted such severe and repeated punishment on them. When it becomes inevitable to mention the Jewish state it is referred to only as "the Zionist entity".

■ This non-acknowledgement of Israel's existence is not simply a matter of semantics. Arab maps do not show Israel, but a vast area, including Jordan, labeled as "Palestine". Cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa simply don't exist. Arab school children, though imbued from earliest age with hatred of the Jews, have no "official" knowledge of the existence of Israel. They learn about it, one supposes, just as they learn about sex, by whispered comments in the schoolyard. Schedules of foreign airlines that show Israel on their route maps or that list Israeli destinations are not allowed in the countries. Foreign publications (among them, one regrets to report, such U.S. magazines as *Time* and *Newsweek*) print special editions for the Arab countries, since no publication carrying advertising of Israeli firms may appear in those countries. And, of course,

tourists of any nationality may not enter most Arab countries if their passports shows evidence that the holder has ever visited Israel, the "non-existent country". Not too many months ago, a U.S. Senator was barred from entering Saudi Arabia, our "faithful ally", because of an Israeli visa stamp that had been placed in his diplomatic passport.

■ As an inducement to Israel for yielding land that is absolutely indispensable for the country's defense, the Arabs now and then offer the possibility of the "recognition" of Israel's existence. The sad and almost incomprehensible aspect of that is that many well-meaning people in the U.S., in other countries, and, yes, even in Israel believe that this might be an acceptable bargain for Israel. But Israel's existence is in no way dependent on the recognition of any Arab state. It's simple: Israel exists because it exists. Therefore, supposing that any meaningful face-to-face meetings came about and if, say, a Syrian diplomat should ask Israel what it would be prepared to "give" if Syria would consider acknowledging Israel's existence, Israel should reply that Israel might in turn consider acknowledging Syria's existence. Or, Israel could declare a boycott of the Arab world and could offer to relax or to rescind such boycott in consideration of parallel gestures by the Arabs.

The bizarre concept of Israel's "non-existence" has been around for over forty years. Many good people, including quite a few in Israel itself, have been led to believe that Israel should bring substantial sacrifices, even to the point of imperiling its own security and survival, in order to get the Arabs to acknowledge Israel's existence. It is often said that Israel needs to be "recognized" by the Arabs in order to "normalize her condition". But need not the Arabs, too, live in "normalized conditions"? And Israel is often promised that, in return for yielding vital strategic territory to the Arabs, she would be assured of "safe and secure borders". But don't the Arabs also need borders that are safe and secure? The Arab countries and much of the world have come to believe that peace is only good and desirable for Israel. But it is surely at least as important for the Arabs, who have lived through and have been bloodily defeated in five wars with Israel - the "non-existent country". Peace and prosperity can and will come to this troubled region only when the Arabs accept the reality of Israel's existence and negotiate with her openly and in good faith.

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implementation. Ronald Reagan was able to rise above the workaday details of the state government in Sacramento, as he later did with the national government in Washington. Mario Cuomo's struggles with the New York state government have been portrayed, by Cuomo and a sympathetic press, as a lamentable nuisance that has kept him from talking about the big picture.

Osborne and Gaebler concentrate exclusively on the delivery end of government, although their findings naturally have implications for how laws should be drafted in the future. Their most significant accomplishment is to integrate many hundreds of examples into a basically new concept of how government should function. This concept is organized into ten chapters, reflecting the ten operating principles that distinguish a new "entrepreneurial" form of government. But they all seem to be corollaries of one central principle: Government should use incentives, so that people want to do certain things, rather than using rules and regulations that force people to comply.

This is also the main idea of the New Paradigm movement, an on-again-off-again bipartisan effort to re-think government. The Old Paradigm, in this view, was born almost a century ago, during the Progressive era, when "political reform" mainly meant government efforts to regulate the mighty business trusts, plus the breaking up of corrupt political machines. (Progressive reformers, like many New Paradigmists today, were from the "better class" of people, who looked balefully on the tawdry instincts of ordinary politicians.) The centralized regulatory approach got bigger and stronger through the New Deal, the Second World War, and the postwar welfare, entitlement, and national-security state. Everyone in every party now agrees that the system is too big, costly, and cumbersome. The New Paradigm argument is that the system can't be saved by doing more of the same, and that, contrary to Ronald Reagan's claims, it's not sensible simply to do less of the same. The government must do something different—which brings us back to this book.

Osborne and Gaebler say that by using more incentives and fewer regulations, the government can apply the automatic-feedback mechanisms of the

market to its own operations. Incentives are self-enforcing: if people can save money by changing their behavior, they usually change. Regulations, by contrast, must be enforced. You need inspectors to make sure that companies are complying, and internal inspectors to make sure that the regular inspectors have not been bribed. Osborne and Gaebler provide more illustrations, in more permutations, of the incentive-based approach than I can hint at here.

For example (although this is not included in the book), for nearly a generation the U.S. government has tried to save gasoline by dictating fuel-efficiency standards. Under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, each manufacturer's fleet had to meet a steadily rising "corporate average fuel economy" level: 20 miles per gallon in 1980, 27.5 miles per gallon by 1985. This is, in effect, the King Canute approach to conservation: the sovereign orders the cars to become more efficient. But by the mid-1980s, the price of gasoline was dropping—which left manufacturers with no economic incentive to invest in expensive new engine technology and customers no incentive to buy expensive new fuel-efficient cars. The law did, however, give manufacturers a powerful incentive to lobby Congress and the Department of Transportation, in hopes of overturning the law or postponing the deadlines.

The incentive approach would be simply to raise the tax on gasoline. In the short run that would help cover some of the real cost to the nation of using gas—the environmental impact, the effect on the trade balance (imported oil now accounts for at least half the trade deficit), the need or temptation to fight wars in the Middle East. In the longer run it would transform the car companies and the American public into natural allies in the struggle to create more-efficient cars. When gasoline costs three to four dollars a gallon, as it does in most other First World countries, people find ways to conserve. The same principle applies to other forms of conservation. You see many fewer bottles on the roadside in states with heavy bottle-deposit fees than in states with strict anti-littering laws.

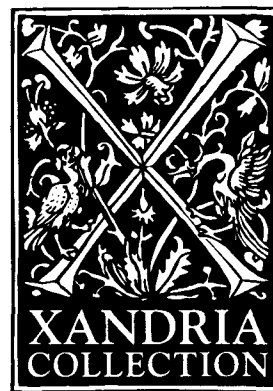
Much of the book is about the internal mechanics of bureaucratic opera-

tion, and it shows great canniness about how regulations and incentives really work. Here a memorable illustration concerns what *The Washington Monthly* magazine, in a pioneering article on the subject twenty years ago, called "The Spring Spending Spree." As a government agency nears the end of a fiscal year (which used to occur in June for the federal government), it has every reason to spend every penny that's left in the budget. Under most budgeting systems it can't keep for the future the money it doesn't spend now—and in fact, underspending this year will usually mean a smaller budget next year, since obviously the department didn't need all the money it had received. The government as a whole may think it wants to reduce spending, but each component part has an incentive to do just the reverse. The answer, as Osborne and Gaebler sensibly explain, lies in changing the incentives, through multi-year budgets, more-flexible budgets that allow managers to move money from one account to another, even encouraging agencies to open moneymaking, businesslike operations.

Some of these reforms can bring new problems of their own. For instance, the Customs Service is allowed to sell the boats and airplanes it confiscates from drug smugglers, and to use the proceeds for its own budget. Some lawyers have complained about an overzealous approach to confiscation. Osborne and Gaebler carefully sift through such consequences, as part of their generally sophisticated-sounding understanding of bureaucratic realities.

Rather than paraphrasing the entire book, let me simply say that it is full of sensible, specific recommendations. Politicians and government officials really should read and underline in it. But I'm not sure that many other people should.

ONE OBJECTION to this book is on the purely conceptual level: it offers a view of government that defines away some of our largest, most difficult political problems. The book's working assumption is that the American public, through its government, always means to do the right thing, and that it's held back only by specific failures and barriers—faulty information, bad incentives. A suspiciously large



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number of supporting anecdotes are drawn from cities like Orlando, Phoenix, and Sunnyvale, California, in Silicon Valley. In such places the political world may operate as Osborne and Gaebler say, and the main drama of government may be the struggle to serve its people more efficiently. But in many other political arenas, from the local to the federal level, government works on more Hobbesian premises. It takes money from the politically weak and gives it to the politically strong. No one opposes the concept of efficiency, but in practice many parts of the government are designed to be nonefficient—that is, to preserve jobs. The major problem in federal politics is not that the government is perplexed about how to administer programs. It is that the public demands more in services and benefits than it is willing to pay for in taxes.

Osborne and Gaebler do not explicitly deny that any of these complications exist, but an implied faux optimism runs throughout the book: If only we knew all the facts, we'd never make these foolish mistakes. For instance, in illustrating the (unexceptionable) point that it's cheaper to prevent a problem than to solve it after it has happened, they mention that thousands of young black men are killed or wounded by gunfire every year. It would be more sensible and efficient, they suggest, to get rid of the guns than to build more jails. You don't say! Hey, maybe it would also be more sensible if the Arabs and Israelis made friends, rather than fighting so much! But perhaps there's something involved in the Middle East, and in America's reliance on guns, that goes beyond faulty cost-benefit analysis.

Osborne and Gaebler might properly respond that they're not trying to solve all the world's problems; it's enough to help solve a few, as their book will. But a sort of chirpiness in the book's outlook is connected to its most serious literary and intellectual defect. I trust the conclusions that the authors reach mainly because the conclusions conform to my experience as a reporter and in the government. But I don't trust all the evidence they present. This book sometimes seems to be the work of salesmen, not reporters or analysts.

The anecdotes that jam the pages have an unvarying narrative structure. A government program is failing. The

administrator stops and thinks things over the entrepreneurial way. He takes the New Paradigm approach and—presto!—"the results speak for themselves" (a phrase that is worked to death in the book).

I don't doubt that something like this sequence happened—that the programs worked better after the change—just as I don't doubt that people who go to Dale Carnegie courses generally become better speakers. But the tone of the book often reminded me of an Amway or a Dale Carnegie sales pitch, or a TV infomercial. Every story is a success story. Before the change everything is bad. After the change everything is good. Characters have no function or nuance except to put the New Paradigm into effect. I respect Osborne and Gaebler as theorists about the government, but I do not trust them as reporters—that is, people who will observe critically and openly and tell you everything they have seen.

My suspicions are heightened by their handling of a case I happen to know about firsthand. Osborne and Gaebler present a long and 100 percent favorable profile of William Creech, a retired Air Force general who from 1978 to 1984 ran the Tactical Air Command, often called TAC. TAC was the fighter-plane branch of the Air Force. Before Creech took command, it had terrible operational and morale problems. Large numbers of planes sat in the hangars, for lack of spare parts. Pilots could not get enough flying hours to remain proficient. By the time Creech left, things looked much better for TAC. More planes were operational; more pilots were in the air. ("The results speak for themselves.")

Osborne and Gaebler present this as a clear-cut morality play. Before Creech arrived, TAC had been overcentralized—that is, Old Paradigm. Repair work was handled by one big, impersonal, centralized depot, which slowed things down and eroded morale. Creech believed in decentralization and incentives. He got rid of the central repair depot and made each squadron responsible for its own maintenance. He made sure that the head mechanic's name was painted on each plane's nose, right next to the pilot's, to symbolize their bond. He emphasized the intangible elements of pride: "He had every building in the TAC com-



mand given a fresh coat of paint, and he invested in carpets and furniture and new barracks." Most impressive of all, according to Osborne and Gaebler, "TAC accomplished all of this with no new money, no more people, and a work force with less experience than the work force in place through the years of decline."

Osborne and Gaebler chose to italicize this passage in their book, which is unfortunate, because it is both flatly untrue and broadly misleading. TAC's turnaround had everything to do with money. The "years of decline" in the late 1970s were due principally to dishonest budgeting. The Air Force, along with the other services, chronically lowballed its estimates of how much a new fighter plane or missile would cost, in order to get more planes authorized. Inevitably the planes cost more than "expected," and the services made up the difference by raiding the operations-and-maintenance account. The result was the bad old TAC that Osborne and Gaebler describe, with too little fuel and too few spare parts.

Creech's tenure coincided with the early years of the Reagan boom in defense spending. The reforms Creech made were undoubtedly important, but so was the money. The TAC budget went up 44 percent during Creech's tenure, which included a big increase in the operations-and-maintenance account.

It would not have undermined Osborne and Gaebler's case to show that the story had complications. No matter how much money is involved, it still makes sense to decentralize authority, as Creech did. It would not have hurt to hint that the man himself might have had complicated motivations. Because Creech's story seems to fit their argument, Osborne and Gaebler present him as a one-dimensional hero ("a man who remains a legend within the U.S. Air Force, even in retirement"). They discuss Creech in a way that sounds as though they have talked with him personally—"Creech later confided," "Creech asked." I don't know whether they actually talked to Creech—their reference notes show that most of the quotations come from one of Creech's published speeches and a magazine profile—but if they did, they could hardly have avoided noticing the droll side of his emphasis on pride in appearance. The carpet in his office

was so thick that one's shoes practically disappeared in it. His assistants were so ramrod-straight and wrinkle-free that it was easy to imagine the daily panic as they prepared to meet the general's eye.

Osborne and Gaebler's case would have been even more powerful if they'd been able to admit that real people, not earthbound saints, put it into effect. □

## The Last of the Beautiful Rubes

by Peter Davison

THE INTERIOR CASTLE:  
The Art and Life of Jean Stafford  
by Ann Hulbert.  
Knopf, \$25.00.

IN THE 1950s there were those of us who breathlessly awaited each issue of *The New Yorker* in the hope that it might contain, as it often did, a new story by Jean Stafford, whose name at the time carried the sort of weight that Raymond Carver's did in the 1980s. She was in some senses the perfect 1950s fiction writer: elegant, pert, extremely articulate, sophisticated, and, unlike some *New Yorker* fiction writers, immensely varied in subject matter. The fifties displayed her short-story mastery; among her three novels (the last published in 1952) the first, the wildly successful *Boston Adventure* (1944), showed her to be an heir of Henry James, and the second, *The Mountain Lion* (1947), a scion of Mark Twain. She was, in short, a writer both eastern and western, at home alike on the ranch and in the library.

Stafford, whom I knew in childhood as my father's favorite student at the University of Colorado, was especially precious to a western kid as a paragon of eastern sophistication: she always spoke in a husky confidentiality that I found irresistible, though she wrote in different voices. She was a beautiful if troubled young woman, who modeled in the nude for art classes to supplement her scholarship. She worked for several



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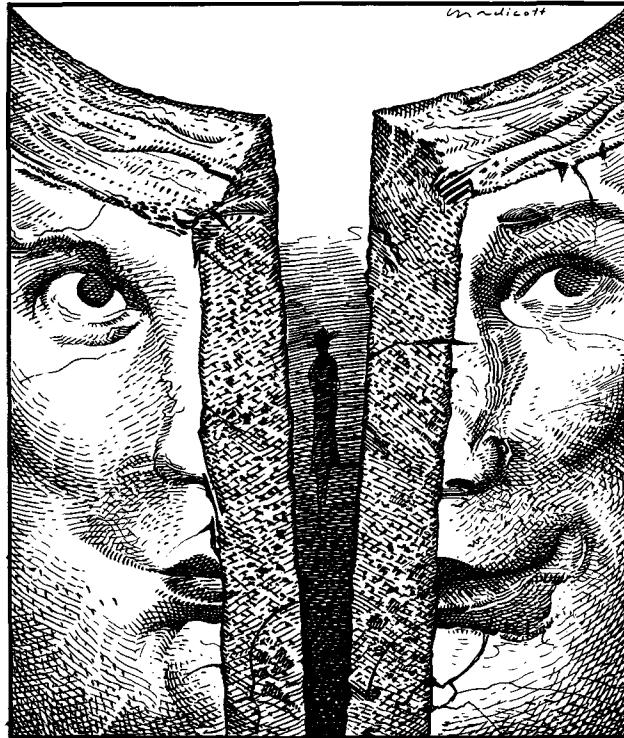
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summers at the Writers Conference at the University of Colorado and, despite her enormous personal charm, seemed often ill, frail, underfed, overstimulated, and in need of protection, which many people, my mother included, pressed upon her. Because she was an obviously brilliant student, her earliest ambitious writings came promptly to the attention of such as Ford Madox Ford, John Crowe Ransom, and Harvard's Howard Mumford Jones. Jones referred her to Edward Weeks, at *The Atlantic Monthly*, when she was only twenty-two, after she had returned to Colorado from a dubious year in Heidelberg (where she had been courted by a young scholar of Chinese named Robert Hightower).

She settled in Boston in late 1938 to finish a novel, but two weeks after she signed an option for its publication with the Atlantic Monthly Press, her life (not least important her physical appearance) was abruptly altered when her youthful suitor, Robert Lowell, whom she had met in Colorado,

smashed his parents' car, with Stafford in the passenger seat, into a wall in a dead-end Cambridge street. She was rushed to the hospital with "massive head injuries," as a friend described it, "everything fractured, skull, nose, jaw, everything." The damage would never be entirely disguised. . . . for Stafford the collision took on symbolic dimensions that helped give her the themes around which her emerging style matured.

For some months Stafford lingered in and around Boston—courted by Lowell at a distance from Kenyon College—undergoing an intricate series of surgical operations to reassemble her skull, her face, and her nose, and to correct her breathing, procedures that ultimately forced her to seek a psychic refuge where, in utmost solitude, her imaginative processes might continue. This "interior castle" (the phrase is taken from St. Teresa of Avila) not only gives Ann Hulbert the title for her remarkable literary biography but gave Jean Stafford the theme and title for her most enduring short story, "The In-



terior Castle" (1946), which Sylvia Plath described on first reading it, in 1959, as a lurid, terrifying rendering of unbearable pain.

Like Plath, Stafford was helplessly drawn, despite the importunity of numerous less perilous suitors, to the one who could dominate her, and after much hesitation, in 1940 she married Lowell in New York. Shortly after his graduation from Kenyon, she followed his star to Louisiana State University, where he pursued his advanced studies in literature, reading Dante with Robert Penn Warren and helping get out *The Southern Review* with Warren and Cleanth Brooks, while Stafford typed Lowell's manuscripts and Warren's correspondence. It was one of the most disastrous of marriages between writers, and previous writers—even the participants—have failed to do it justice. Perhaps Ann Hulbert's most amazing achievement is to evoke and penetrate the interior workings of Stafford's mind, especially during the period (1940–1946) when it was most intimately intertwined with Lowell's.

"Stafford reversed the usual relation between art and life," Ann Hulbert writes.

Her books, she suggested, shaped her life as much as, if not more than, her life shaped her books. It is a point too rarely acknowledged about writers' relations to their creations:

plumbing a life for psychological clues to the writing that emerges from it, critics and biographers sometimes neglect to observe that a life is in turn altered by writing.

David Roberts's *Jean Stafford: A Biography* (1988) was fairly stigmatized by Joyce Carol Oates as no more than a "pathography" of Stafford's beleaguered, alcoholic, and self-abusive life; and Charlotte Margolis Goodman, in *Jean Stafford: The Savage Heart* (1990), while paying more attention to Stafford's writing than Roberts had, often did so simplistically, treating the art as a gloss on events in the life and stressing feminist themes that in fact may not have been equal in importance to Stafford's artistic commitment.

Some artists are artists first and women second, and Jean Stafford would—sadly for her, perhaps—seem to have been one of these.

Ann Hulbert quite brilliantly manages not only to tell us Stafford's life story but also to track the strange processes of both her mind and Lowell's as one writer made her way through *Boston Adventure* to *The Mountain Lion* and the other traveled through his first book, *Land of Unlikeness*, to his 1947 Pulitzer Prize-winning success, *Lord Weary's Castle*. Other roles in these wandering and dramatic years are played by Delmore Schwartz, Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon, John Crowe Ransom, John Berryman and Eileen Simpson, Randall Jarrell, Gertrude Buckman, William Phillips, Philip Rahv, Robert Giroux, Gregory Zilboorg, very especially Peter Taylor, who unlike other friends remained devoted for life to both Lowell and Stafford, and a dozen other luminaries in New York, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Colorado. Despite the privacy of Jean Stafford's interior castle, her literary life with Lowell, like his own subsequent career, was intimately twined with the life and contentions of little magazines—the two of them lived close to *The Southern Review* and *The Partisan Review*. *The Interior Castle* conveys the intellectual snobbery of the generation of *poètes maudits* and their consorts, who were given to declarations like "None

of us has ever read a book which appeared on the best-seller list" and much name-calling with such epithets as Lowbrow, Masscult, Midcult. Robert Frost, amused by the bloodletting, joked, "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow, Nobrow."

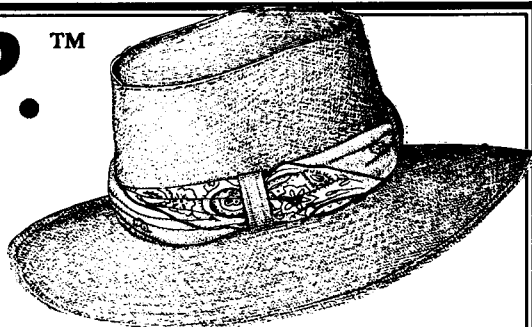
It was not until after she and Lowell had parted, in 1946, under the most agonizing circumstances, with severe mental breakdowns, first on her side and then on his, that Stafford formed her essential alliance with *The New Yorker*, a magazine whose Coloradan editor-in-chief, Harold Ross, and New England fiction editor, Katharine White, nurtured and displayed her dazzling talent—a magazine that the certified intellectuals condescended to, and in whose pages Lowell's work never once appeared. Stafford's view of literary society had altered. As she wrote in the heartbreaking "Children Are Bored on Sunday," with which she made her *New Yorker* debut in 1948,

These cocktail parties were a *modus vivendi* in themselves for which a new philosophy, a new ethic, and a new etiquette had had to be devised. . . . This being an intellectual was not the same thing as dilettantism; it was a calling in itself. . . . Emma could not look upon herself as an intellectual. Her private antonym of this noun was "rube," and to her regret . . . she was not even a bona-fide rube. In her store clothes, so to speak, she was often taken for an intellectual, for she had, poor girl, gone to college and had never been quite the same since. . . . She was a bounty jumper in the war between Great-uncle Graham's farm and New York City, and liable to court-martial on one side and death on the other. Neither staunchly primitive nor confidently *au courant*, she rarely knew where she was at. And this was her Achilles' heel: her identity was always mistaken, and she was thought to be an intellectual who, however, had not made the grade.

This story—excoriated by most of Stafford's little-magazine confreres—cast her out of the little-magazine coterie. During the years of Stafford's *New Yorker* ascendancy in the short story, she was struggling with a novel that she could not master, titled *In the Snowfall*, about the suicide of a close woman friend from her Colorado University days. She was married again, briefly and frustratingly, to Oliver Jensen, later

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"This was one of his tricks for getting out of something he didn't want to do: simply saying he didn't feel like it would be rude, by his lights, so he worked up a steam of indignation until we gave in to his bad mood." A short story.

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one of the founders of *American Heritage*, and in 1959, when her productivity in the short story was waning, for a third time, to the redoubtable, aging, corpulent, and worldly *New Yorker* journalistic virtuoso and gourmand A. J. Liebling ("Liebling, in his gallant, gluttonous way, knew how to court fragile women"). "There was a convergence in the broad direction of their literary course at this stage of their lives," Hulbert writes, "when middle age was weighing heavily on them: they were both drawn to nostalgic efforts at memoir."

This may have been the happiest relationship of both their lives, but Liebling died in 1963, and for the next sixteen years Jean Stafford declined into protracted eccentricity, mostly on Long Island, in the ironic guise of "the widow Liebling," struggling with yet another unfinishable novel, titled *The Parliament of Women*, drinking an appalling amount, supporting herself mostly by increasingly mannered journalism, and eventually, after a stroke, undergoing the most poignant punishment a truly witty conversationalist can suffer: a nearly total loss of speech. Her last published work, the uncharacteristically autobiographical story "An Influx of Poets" (1978), was lovingly excised from her unfinished novel by her editor, Robert Giroux, and it recounted to *New Yorker* readers the conditions of her marriage to Robert Lowell, who had died the year before. Locked into the interior castle of her consciousness, she died in silence and fury in 1979. She left her entire estate to her devoted housekeeper, in a gesture that may have signified more than disorientation, as Hulbert suggests: "It was as though Stafford were settling the long tension between her identities as a woman and as a writer by declaring her allegiance to domesticity." As the concluding sentences of *Boston Adventure* had put it, "For the time being, I had walled up my mother into the farthest recess of my mind, knowing that the time would come when I must let her out again." Jean Stafford's father had been a pretentious sagebrush writer, whose only published novel she had never been able to bring herself to read; her mother had kept a boarding-house in Colorado. Who says that the interior operations of a writer's mind do not affect the life?

But we normally value a writer not

for the quality of his or her life but for the quality of the work. Jean Stafford's short stories, which won her the Pulitzer Prize in 1970, contain some of the best writing of the American mid-century, along with the work of Flannery O'Connor and John Cheever. When writing in her grande-dame mode, she was capable of flourishes like "There was no stratum of society not reeking with the effluvium of fraud and pettifoggery," and when in her rube mode, of marvelous simplicities like "Up until I learned my lesson in a very bitter way, I never had more than one friend at a time, and my friendships, though ardent, were short." But she possessed, more than other writers, a wondrous knowledge of the secrets of the inner self. As she wrote in her own "The Interior Castle,"

She believed that she had reached the innermost chamber of knowledge and that perhaps her knowledge was the same as the saint's achievement of pure love. It was only convention, she thought, that made one say "sacred heart" and not "sacred brain." □

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*Brief  
Reviews*

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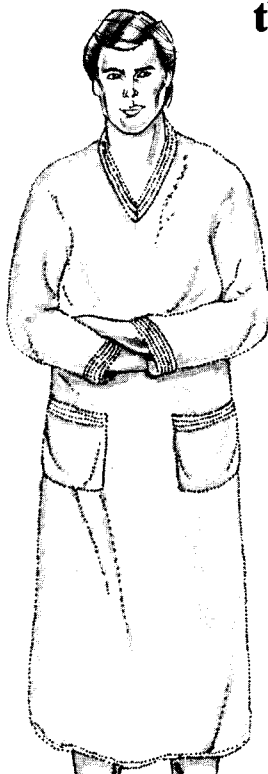
**THE EMPEROR'S LAST ISLAND** by *Julia Blackburn*. Pantheon, \$22.00. Although the author professes never to have had "any special interest" in Napoleon, she has evidently studied his records and relics extensively. She is not a professional historian and makes no claim to be one. These characteristics have enabled her to produce an unusual, highly idiosyncratic account of Bonaparte's activities on St. Helena, of the comic-opera events following his death, and of the dismal history and currently stagnant condition of the island itself. St. Helena was, when discovered by the Portuguese, a paradise of vegetation and birdlife which flourished until the place fell into the hands of the British East India Company. The island is now

close to treeless, badly eroded, and heavily regulated by London bureaucrats interested primarily in the advancement of their own careers. The islanders suffer from taxation without representation, but are too few to make a protest. By interweaving her own observations and acid opinions with historical facts, Ms. Blackburn has enabled an essentially sad tale of the deaths of a man and an island to be both interesting and engagingly unpredictable.

**ALIAS S. S. VAN DINE** by John Loughery. Scribner's, \$24.00. The murder mysteries of Van Dine were a great success in the 1920s and have been deservedly forgotten. His detective, Philo Vance, was accurately described by a young reviewer named Dashiell Hammett as having "the conversational manner of a high school girl who has been studying the foreign words and phrases at the back of her dictionary." There was, however, more to Van Dine than the ineffable Philo. His real name was Willard Huntington Wright, and he began his career in California as a wasp-penned book reviewer with a sideline in artistic theory which was presumably stimulated by his younger brother, Stanton, who eventually achieved moderate success as a painter. Willard was determined to educate the philistine American public on the merits of modernism in painting. As the editor of the magazine *Smart Set*, he was equally determined to educate that same public on the merits of realism in fiction, which led, in 1913, to a monotonous preponderance of stories about prostitutes and a quick end to the job. Wright's aims were laudable, but his combination of stylistic savagery and the arrogance that sometimes afflicts the autodidact kept him unemployed and impecunious until he tried his hand at becoming what he had once denounced as the lowest form of literary life—a popular novelist. The first Philo Vance stories were based on actual but unsolved New York murder cases, and they were immensely successful. Momentum, movie sales, adroit publicity, and borrowed money kept Wright in extravagant style until the late 1930s, when changing fashions (not to mention much better writing and plotting by younger authors) reduced him once again to hackwork. He died in 1939. A contemporary—Ernest Boyd—described Wright as "the most interesting

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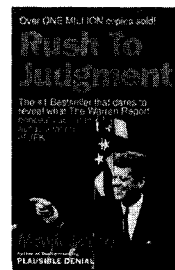
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and attractive unlikable man I have ever known." Wright was in fact a bad character, and he remains unlikable, but his biographer reports a serious revival among art historians of interest in his early books on aesthetic theory. Whatever one thinks of the man and his work, Wright's life has the dramatic form and impetus that make for good reading.

**THE WOMEN OUTSIDE** by *Stephanie Golden*. *University of California*, \$25.00. Ms. Golden is described as a free-lance journalist and medical writer. Her discussion of homeless women, subtitled "Meanings and Myths of Homelessness," indicates that she has a strong bias toward psychological and historical interpretation. She has, in fact, discovered ordinary (nonhomeless) observers whose reactions to the homeless, alias bag ladies, will astonish readers who have seen them simply as poor people coping as best they can with misfortune. Ms. Golden's argument that homeless women are viewed, probably unconsciously, by society as something resembling witches—examples of female independence and dangerously untrammelled anti-establishment power—is well put and, if taken seriously, may indeed explain some of the discrepancies that the author has observed between official arrangements for homeless men and those for similarly shelterless women. She presents a provocative, if somewhat limited, case.

**TRICK OR TREAT** by *Lesley Glaister*. *Atheneum*, \$19.00. The setting of Ms. Glaister's novel is a middle-class district in an English city—an area where residents have owned their houses for years and still maintain allotment gardens left over from the Second World War. One house contains Olive, fat and foggy-witted, and Arthur, withered and garden-mad. Both were lively political radicals in their youth. Another house contains Olive's old classmate Nell, fanatically clean, well-preserved, and quietly insane. She converses regularly with the photograph of her dead husband. In between, there has unaccountably appeared a young woman with sloppy habits, fatherless children, and a come-and-go fellow of no discernible legal status. This interloper and her young son Wolfe invite the neighbors to a Guy Fawkes Day bonfire, where old grudges go off like rock-

ets. The book is actually a suspense story, and a good one, with menace slowly built up on such unusual (for the purpose) objects as Nell's rumpled bedspread and Olive's lost hat.

**SALARYMAN** by *Meg Pei*. *Viking*, \$21.00. Ms. Pei's deftly written novel describes the disintegration of a dutiful company man. It is atypical of its genre in that the narrator-protagonist is a Japanese business executive transferred, despite his wife's fierce resentment, to the United States. He is fluent in English. She can barely speak a word of it and has no wish to learn. Unfamiliar conditions bring to the surface the underlying tensions of the marriage, the woman's boredom with her traditional restriction to a housewife's role, and the man's unacknowledged resentment of his position as superior errand boy and diplomatic front man. At home, the narrator complains, such matters are swept under the rug. On foreign ground they cause a considerable, not altogether salutary, explosion. They also make an intelligent story of cultural collision.

**DON'T LOOK ROUND** by *Violet Trefusis*. *Viking*, \$23.00. When she wrote her memoirs of high society in Edwardian London and of literary Paris between the wars, Violet Trefusis, an eccentric and sometimes disruptive denizen of both worlds, dedicated the book to the memory of her beloved mother. She did not mention that her mother was Mrs. George Keppel, the longtime, elegantly discreet mistress of King Edward VII. Trefusis was, among other accomplishments, a fiction writer with the selective memory and active imagination normal to fabricators. She understandably described her recollections as "selected moments, hand picked." Why weary the reader with unadorned truth? In his introduction Peter Quennell summed up the book gracefully with, "Biased and partial it may be; pedestrian it never is."

**THE LIVING** by *Annie Dillard*. *Harper-Collins*, \$22.50. Ms. Dillard's novel records the up-and-down history of a town on Puget Sound, from its frontier settlement to the late nineteenth century, where the book stops for no particular reason. Descriptions of scenery and weather are vivid, as is to be expected from this author. Details of

lumbering, farming, accidents, business conditions, and the like are convincing, because they smell of old newspaper files. The characters are, unhappily, mostly tissue-paper goody-goodies. The one exception in this virtuous crowd is a psychopath who cannot provide effective suspense because it is clear from the general tone of the story that he will come to an appropriately bad end. Altogether, this is a disappointing work.

**SAINTS IN THEIR OX-HIDE BOAT** by *Brendan Galvin*. *Louisiana State*, \$14.95 and \$7.95. The premise of Mr. Galvin's brisk narrative poem is that Brendan the Navigator, in extreme old age, is dictating a practical account of his already legendary voyage to a young scribe whom he suspects of an inclination to turn facts into miracles. "Don't," he orders the fellow, "edify those grapes to the girth of apples." Mr. Galvin has an exciting gift for finding the unexpected word that proves miraculously perfect in its setting. Brendan, product of a society dominated by superstition and spiritual aspiration, a fugitive from the distractions of material reality, is still too good a seaman to mistake a whale for an island or a vagrant snowy owl for a divine messenger. He wants no edification, but in the end he is himself edified. The divine contact he hoped for actually comes—but not in the way, or with the word, that he had in mind. Mr. Galvin's highly distinctive style blends legend, folktale, psychological reconstruction, and gritty commonplace into its own poetic coherence.

**THE CULTURE OF CONTENTMENT** by *John Kenneth Galbraith*. *Houghton Mifflin*, \$22.95. Professor Galbraith's tightly written discussion of American politics and economics boils down to the unexpected claim that too many people are doing too well. Such citizens are content with their positions and averse to any change in the status quo, particularly one that costs taxpayers money. It is a recipe for stagnation, the author argues, and dangerous because it ignores future benefits and concentrates instead on immediate comforts. Professor Galbraith makes a convincing, even at times amusing, case for his opinion. He offers no solution for the problem.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams



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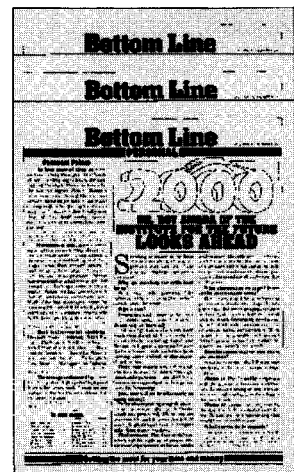
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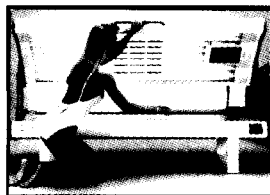
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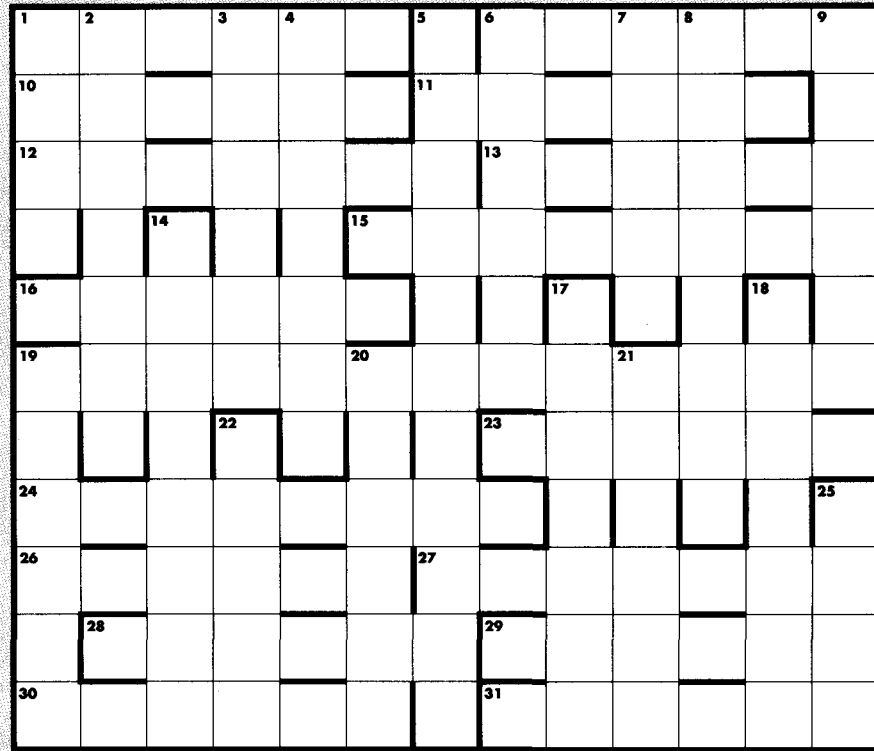
# THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

## CODE PAIRS

In thirteen squares of this diagram, intersecting Across and Down answers have different letters. In these cases both letters should be entered in the square. The resulting thirteen pairs of letters provide the key for deciphering the unclued entry at 19 Across. Clue answers include two proper nouns.

*The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 125.*



## ACROSS

1. Taking small amount of wattage, charger lit up (6)
6. After dance, observed cutter (6)
10. Bill's heard with singers (6)
11. Claim appendage is found in drink (6)
12. Take advantage of Arafat's group in departure (7)
13. Brings on hot dogs (6)
15. Liking swan song (8)
16. Born to ancient Greek super-human? (6)
23. Appear first on behalf of oneself (6)
24. Official, overwhelmed by labors, leaves (8)
26. Call Mom out into daylight (6)
27. Drawing left of an aquatic mammal? (7)

28. Arizona meadow containing a flowering shrub (6)
29. Run—bee is flying around sandwich (6)
30. Blame patriotic women for poet (6)
31. Area established around train stop (6)

## DOWN

1. Large number killed (4)
2. Cloth blankets provided for cow (7)
3. Settlement: last bit of money (6)
4. Desire I have that tends to diminish (7)
5. Supply column for *Cocoon* producer? (11)
6. Massive attack upon eating new sort of pancake (6)
7. Odd characters in Greece know lizard (5)
8. Around Week Eight's beginning, team protested (8)
9. Played the part of Senator Kennedy drunk (6)
14. Fashioned menorahs for cavalry member (8)
17. Artisan offers cover for league's chief conspirator (7)
18. Made Sweet Sue drag buggy (7)
19. Chased by missile, plane dropped cargo (6)
20. Get shaky weapons case? (6)
21. Author's more proper in speech (6)
22. Hardly a lunatic vagrant (5)
25. Brand-new candy (4)

**NOTE:** The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.



# WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

**decession** *noun*, a period of recessionary spending coupled with depressed thinking on the part of consumers: "America has entered a phase we're calling 'Decession'" (*The Popcorn Report*).

BACKGROUND: *Decession* is a blend of *depression*—the emotional kind—and the economic term *recession*. According to Faith Popcorn, the head of the marketing consultancy firm BrainReserve, where the term was coined in 1990, *decessionary* thinking is fueled not only by current economic uncertainties but also by bitterness and guilt about the credit and spending excesses of the 1980s. Other factors include job dissatisfaction, health and environmental threats, anxiety about crime and violence, and a perception of government and society as rudderless. The result has been a cutback in spending, a return to cash from plastic, and a lack of confidence in the quality of essential goods. Popcorn predicts that the current *decession* and the angry "vigilante consumer" it has spawned may erode traditional brand loyalties and perhaps bring down some long-established companies.

**grassy knollism** *noun*, the persistent creation of conspiracy theories despite a paucity of evidence: "Harry Hopkins would have been at home in the land of *grassy-knollism*" (*Boston Globe*).

BACKGROUND: Thousands of references have been made in print in the past 29 years to a certain *grassy knoll* along the Dallas freeway where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Some 600 books about the assassination have been published, many suggesting the existence of a second sniper on that knoll and promoting theories of cabals involving the intelligence community, organized crime, the military-industrial complex, and the executive branch. *Grassy knollism* may result from

*Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary, published by Houghton Mifflin. A new word that exhibits sustained use may eventually make its way into the dictionary. The information below represents the first stage of research, not the final product.*

a desire to confer some measure of sense, however unsettling, on the seemingly senseless. The term has obviously been spotlighted by the controversy over Oliver Stone's film *JFK*, and seems destined to find a permanent place in the vernacular.

**outsider art** *noun*, a work of contemporary art created by a nontraditional artist using highly unusual media, such as wire, bones, buttons, pebbles, or pieces of concrete: "The French call it *art offshore* or *art brut*, and in English it is known as *outsider art*: works by unschooled visionaries . . . who know nothing of mainstream art" (*New York Times*).

BACKGROUND: The word *outsider* in this compound refers both to the artists' lack of formal training and to their venues—typically isolated lo-

cales far from established artistic centers. *Outsider artists* are often country folk, the elderly, or the very young, or sometimes the mentally ill; many of their creations are said to arise from visions and dreams. *Outsider art* is increasingly sought by collectors and may command five-figure prices. Its recent popularity has been attributed to a renewed respect for handcrafted items, a growing boredom with more-conventional styles of art, and the skyrocketing prices of works by established artists.

**Skycar** *noun*, a lightweight one- to four-passenger car-sized aircraft meant for commuting: "The *skycar* . . . is designed to take off and land vertically—handy for those tight parking spots" (*Toronto Star*).

BACKGROUND: The *Skycar*, which was modeled late last

year, is the culmination of some 25 years of work and as many millions of dollars in expenditures by Paul Moller, a former aeronautical-engineering professor at the University of California at Davis. It has eight air-cooled rotary engines, each generating 150 horsepower—enough to boost it to a cruising speed of more than 300 miles per hour. (It can also hover, motionless, in midair.) The vehicle is designed to travel at altitudes of up to 30,000 feet. It comes equipped with two joysticks—one for altitude, another for direction—two video screens for flight control and navigation, parachutes, and folding wingtips for easy garage parking. It gets about 15 miles to a gallon of fuel. To date, 97 orders for the *Skycar* have been received. Initially it will sell for \$995,000, but the price is expected to drop as production volume increases—a discomfiting scenario indeed.

**Velcroid or velcroid** *noun*, *slang*, a person who makes a point of staying near an important leader in order to gain media visibility and ensure continued access to that leader: "Ever notice the people who chum up to the Prime Minister in pictures? Call them *velcroids*" (*Toronto Star*).

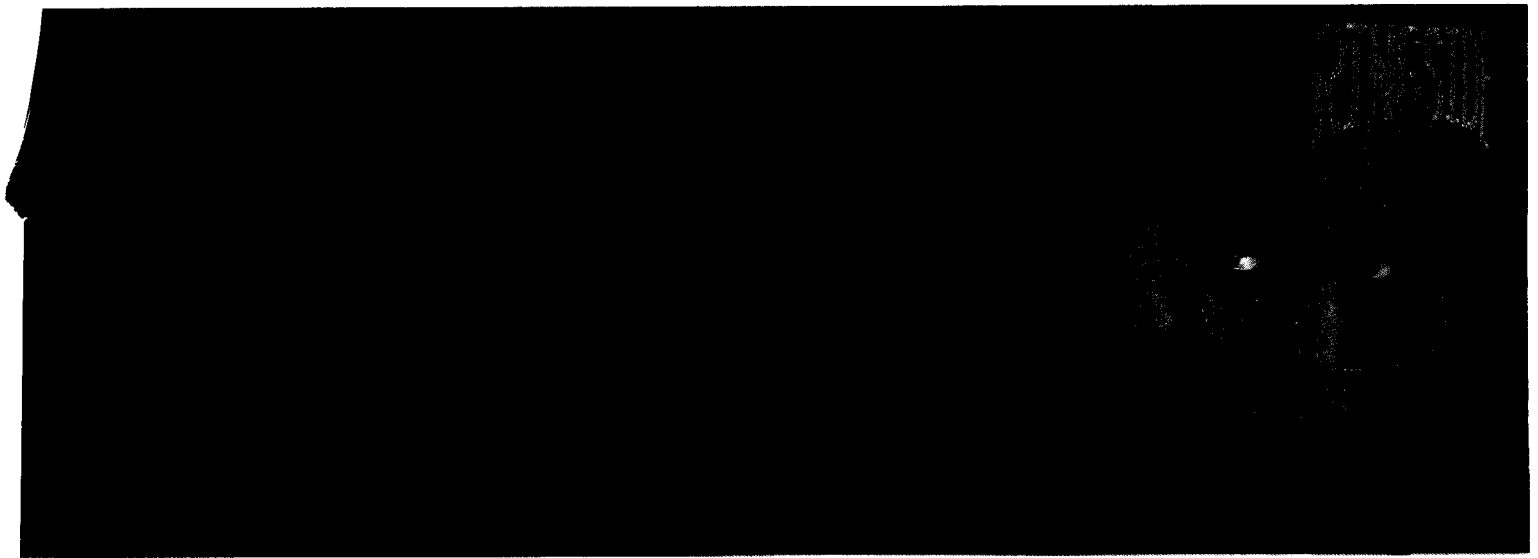
BACKGROUND: Last year *The New York Times* drew up a list of White House *Velcroids*. Foremost among them was John Sununu, at the time the White House chief of staff, who earned this notice by dint of his behavior at presidential photo opportunities, especially during the Gulf War. Other recent examples of terms derived from trademarks include *Teflon President*, which refers, of course, to Ronald Reagan's uncanny ability to emerge from criticism unscathed, and *talkzak*: "The endless *talkzak* at the Knesset is a perfect counterpoint to the inescapable muzak [sic] that pollutes our daily lives" (*Jerusalem Post*).



ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL C. WITTE

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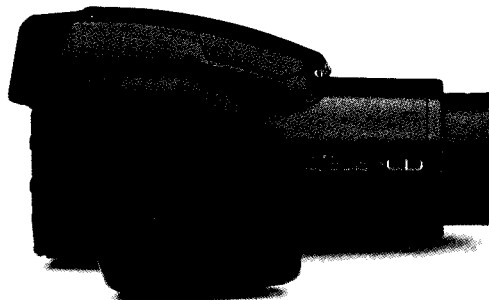
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*flash, dual-strobe, plus you can*



*zoom expose, spot meter, shoot*

*continuously at 1.7 FPS. The amazing IS-1. Any option you need, to capture any photograph you want.*

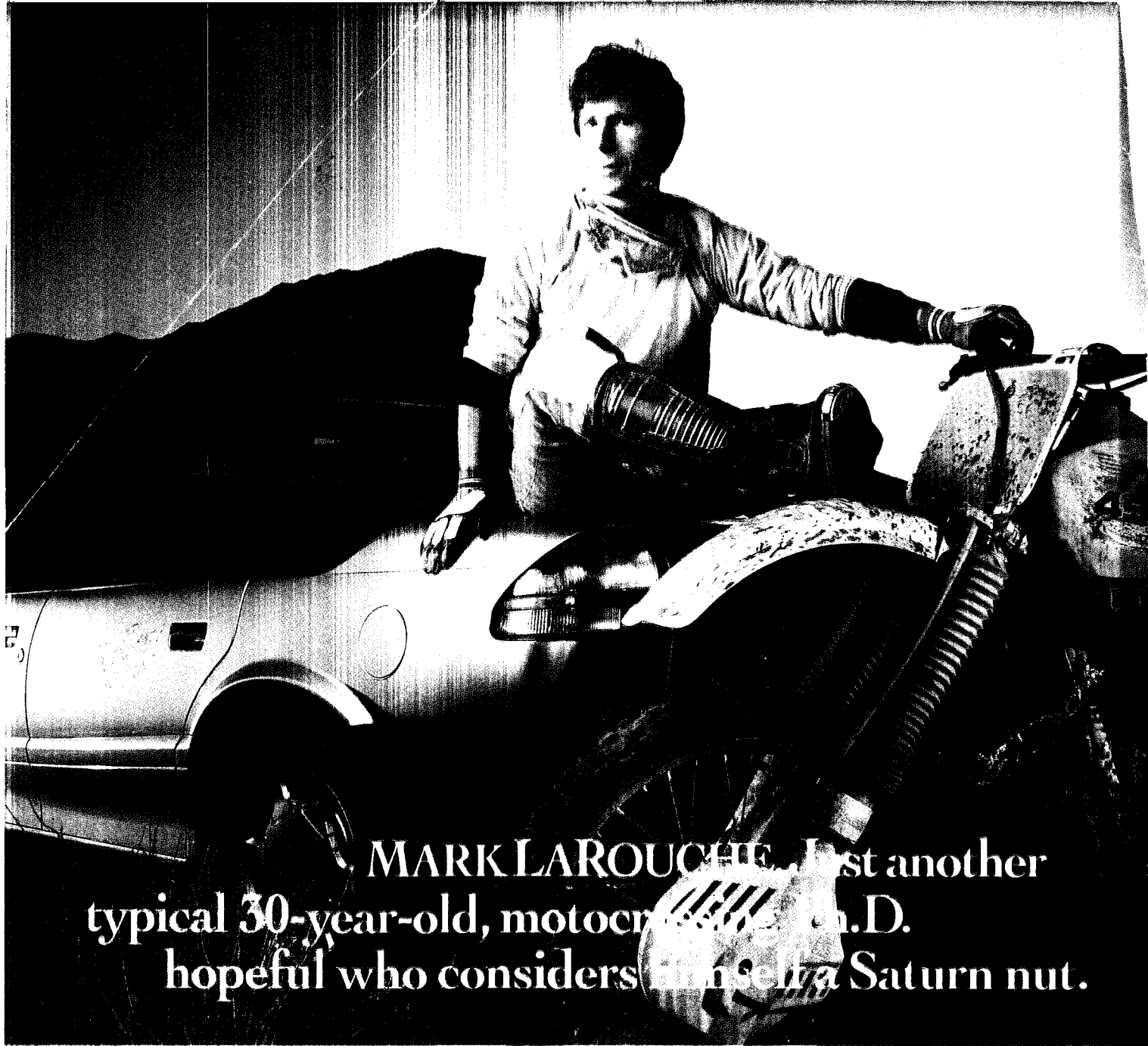
## And there'd be no Olympus IS-1 to capture all these moments.

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**MARK LAROUCHE. Just another typical 30-year-old, motocrossing Ph.D. hopeful who considers himself a Saturn nut.**

Mark LaRouche obviously isn't the type to settle for some meek car with an anemic little powerplant.

So after nixing the idea of buying a Honda Accord because the little numbers on the sticker weren't so little, Mark jumped all over the SL1. In his words, "along with performance that swivels a fair share of heads, the SL1 didn't cost nearly as much as the Accord.\*"



Today, with their bank account largely intact, his wife says they are now in the position to start looking for a new house. After, of course, Mark does something about getting himself into a shower.

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